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THE PAVILION.

A NOVEL.

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THE PAVILION.

A

NOVEL.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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TO

SIR HENRY MARTIN, BART.

SIR,

THO' my name is not annexed to the following volumes, I am perſuaded you will know to a certainty the Author, who freely confeſſes that to your moſt excellent Father they were to have been addreſſed.

It is among the tendereſt and moſt gratifying feelings of the human heart, to dwell with fond remembrance on the claims of departed worth, and to expreſs, when the object is beyond the reach of adulation, the warmeſt emotions of friendſhip and eſteem.

I loved

I loved your Father, Sir, with a ſiſterly affection. For many years, the ſtricteſt friendſhip wove its band ſo firmly between us, that I flatter myſelf it could never have known decay.— Never, I am ſure, could I have ceaſed paying the profoundeſt reſpect to ſo exalted a character. In what numberleſs inſtances have I been a witneſs to his merits, to his ſuperior judgment, and to the elevated principles of his heart! — How often have I ſeen the internal rectitude of his mind baniſh every temptation of ſelf-intereſt, and virtue bear ſovereign-ſway over his actions! — His loſs, Sir, was a public, as well as a private, calamity.

Perhaps it might have been thought preſumption in me to have put ſo reſpectable a Name before ſo trifling a work. But, Sir, however trifling it may

may be, as I am conſcious there will be nothing found in it of an immoral tendency, I truſt and believe he would not have been offended with the preſumption. He was not an enemy to works of this nature, but uſed to permit his family, among their more uſeful ſtudies, to read them.—And, whatever have been their ſtudies and amuſements, the happy effects of them ſufficiently prove that they cannot have been injudicious.

I can with truth ſay, that my principal motive, for publiſhing theſe volumes, originated in the ſatisfaction it afforded me of publicly declaring my reſpect, affection, and veneration, for your family.

You, Sir, with the name and title of your Father, appear to inherit his excellencies. They will inſure to you laſting

laſting reſpect and eſteem. And it is the ardent wiſh of my heart that thoſe virtues, which you poſſeſs, may help to revive the happineſs of your ſurviving moſt-excellent parent, whoſe conduct, in every reſpect, riſes ſuperior to any praiſe I can be low.

I will only add, Sir, that, when you peruſe the following Pages, I ſhould dread the effects of your ſuperior underſtanding and critical diſcernment, did I not confidently truſt to that partiality you have on all occaſions ſhewn towards, Sir,

Your very faithful Friend,

And much obliged

Humble Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

THE

PAVILION.

CHAP. I.

In which the Reader is desired not to be a severe critic, nor to form a decisive judgment of the History, though he may be inclined to consider it as a specimen of the Author's ability.

AS the personages, who will first make their appearance in this book, have no titles to grace or disgrace them, no ancient pedigree to boast of, by which they can claim honours and insure attention—we shall only say, in very plain and unequivocal terms, that William Hoskins and his wife were worthy, honest people. They piqued themselves upon their integrity; but then,

perhaps, they had leſs temptation than many others to barter principles for what is called intereſt. — He lived in tranquillity, cultivating his little farm, ſituated about twelve miles from the city of York; and ſhe was happy in fulfilling the duties of her department. He married her out of a family of ſome diſtinction, where ſhe had lived many years, and had gained the eſteem of her ſuperiors; and when Jenny left the family, a young lady (who was a diſtant relation and frequent gueſt) expreſſed particular concern at her loſs, and promiſed never to forget her.

Near three years had elapſed ſince that period, when, on one of the fineſt and moſt enlivening mornings that ever May produced, a poſt-chaiſe and four ſtopped at Mr. Hoſkins's gate. As the farm-houſe was out of the high road, and Mrs. Hoſkins quite unaccuſtomed to ſee carriages of this kind, it ſoon drew her attention, and inſtantly ſhe left off feeding her chickens, to ſee whom this viſitor would prove; when, to her great ſurpriſe, and no ſmall pleaſure, ſhe ſaw getting out

out of the chaiſe, with an infant in her arms, her favourite young lady, who immediately, ſaluting her by the name of her dear Jenny, inquired whether ſhe could have a bed at her houſe for one night. Mrs. Hoſkins readily anſwered in the affirmative, expreſſing the greateſt joy at ſeeing her, and in a manner that left no doubt of her ſincerity.

The poſt-chaiſe was diſcharged, and an excellent breakfaſt of tea, brown bread, and thick cream, prepared in a ſmall but perfectly neat room, ornamented with china on the ſhelves of a corner cupboard, and furniſhed with a clean oak table, and wainſcot chairs. From the windows you looked over a delightful country, and had a full view of a moſt beautiful park. The gloſs of induſtry ſhone conſpicuouſly on the furniture of this little cottage, and every object, that preſented itſelf, bore marks of the good houſewifery of its owners. The young lady, whom (as we foreſee our readers will not be ſatisfied without a name) we ſhall call Louiſa, ſat herſelf down, and for ſome minutes endea-

voured to partake of the pleaſure Mrs. Hoſkins expreſſed at their meeting; but ſome converſation ſoon followed, that gave a very different appearance to the ſtate of her mind. Mrs. Hoſkins had been ſtruck with the ſight of the infant, and had given it thoſe careſſes ſo natural to beſtow on little children. She had likewiſe ſurveyed it with an eye of curioſity, and her mind had been buſy in conſidering to whom it could belong. She believed Louiſa to be as virtuous as ſhe was beautiful, and had the higheſt opinion of her circumſpection and prudence. While ſhe in vain endeavoured to ſolve this myſtery, Louiſa burſt into tears. The friendly heart of Mrs. Hoſkins immediately ſympathized, and ſhe, with great earneſtneſs, entreated her dear lady to let her know the cauſe of her ſorrows, and eagerly enquired whether it was in her power to do any thing to leſſen them. Louiſa thanked her in the warmeſt terms, and ſaid that ſhe had indeed occaſion to make trial of her friendſhip; and, being perſuaded ſhe might ſafely confide in it, had come there with the intention of doing ſo.

"You are ſurpriſed," continued ſhe, "my good Mrs. Hoſkins; I know you muſt be ſo, to ſee me in this ſudden manner; and the ſight of this infant muſt increaſe your wonder. If I had not determined to tell you that it belongs to me, I believe my agitation and concern for it would have done ſo.—Yes, it is mine;—do not ſtart!—I hope it is unneceſſary to add, that I am married; that is a circumſtance, I truſt, after what I have acknowledged, which you could not have any doubt about:—but I ſhall poſſibly ſtill appear to you imprudent, when I tell you that my marriage is a ſecret. I cannot at preſent enter into the reaſons for its being ſo, but I hope, from what you have known of me, that you will do me the juſtice to believe that I have as much to ſay in my excuſe, as any one can have who marries clandeſtinely; when I ſay clandeſtinely, I mean that my huſband's family are ignorant of the circumſtance; for my brother, the only perſon to whom I am any ways accountable, not only approves of what I have done, but made uſe of the ſtrongeſt perſuaſions

to urge me to it. My huſband is obliged to go abroad; I am to follow with my brother, and am driven to the neceſſity of leaving my beloved infant;—but to leave it to the uncertain care of a common nurſe would break my heart. I truſt that you have regard enough for me to take charge of it." A flood of tears accompanied this requeſt. and Mrs. Hoſkins, who had great love for Louiſa, and whoſe heart was framed of the moſt tender materials, found no difficulty in granting it.

Louiſa then preſented her with a hundred guineas, ſaid ſhe hoped to hear frequently from her, and ſettled their mode of correſpondence. She added, it was right to provide againſt all poſſible accidents, and therefore would leave a letter ſealed up in her (Mrs. Hoſkins's) hands, that, if ſhe were ever four years without hearing from her, ſhould be opened; as, in that caſe, ſome fatal event muſt have happened to her huſband, and it would then become highly proper that it ſhould be known to whom the

the child belonged, and ſhe had no doubt but it would be received by its father's family; but ſhe enjoined Mrs. Hoſkins neither to open the letter, nor reveal a ſingle circumſtance relative to the affair, before the ſtated period. "Should any thing happen to you, my worthy friend, (continued Louiſa,) which heaven avert! let my child be committed to the charge of your ſiſter, Hannah Jones, who, though much your inferior in point of education, is nevertheleſs a woman of integrity; and with her I think my dear infant would be ſafe; and who lives, you ſay, a very little way from you."

Every thing being thus ſettled, as much to the ſatisfaction of Louiſa as the buſineſs would admit of, ſhe compoſed herſelf ſufficiently to enter into Mrs. Hoſkins's account of her own affairs, whoſe happineſs ſhe found was greatly diſturbed by her huſband's precarious ſtate of health. Louiſa endeavoured to comfort her with the hope that his diſorder, though troubleſome, might

not be attended with any more ſerious conſequence. Mrs. Hoſkins replied, that her greateſt comfort was in her humble reſignation to the will of heaven, and, while her tears fell plentifully, ſhe changed the ſubject by aſking her young lady if ſhe would take a walk. Louiſa readily conſented, and, after having been round a neat little garden and a ſmall farm-yard, Mrs. Hoſkins conducted her down a lane, where there was a gate, which opened into the park before mentioned.

They entered, but Louiſa did not chooſe to walk much there, becauſe it were poſſible that ſhe might meet with ſome one who knew her; ſhe therefore contented herſelf with a diſtant proſpect of Lady Falkner's elegant park, houſe, and gardens, and was much pleaſed at hearing of her generous and benevolent actions, — that ſhe did ſo much good, as to be a bleſſing to the neighbourhood,—and was ſo unfaſhionable, as to think that her rank and power could not be ſo well exerted as in protecting and relieving her

her poor tenants, and, indeed, all around her who ſtood in need of aſſiſtance.

Louiſa returned to the farm, and ſpent as happy a day as ſhe could, previous to that on which ſhe was to part with her beloved child. The morning came too ſoon,—a poſt-chaiſe arrived, and, when Louiſa had on her knees implored the protection of heaven for her *Ethelinda*,—had given numberleſs heart-felt ſighs, and almoſt drowned her with tears, ſhe reſigned her into the arms of Mrs. Hoſkins, and flung herſelf into the carriage, which was ſoon out of ſight. Mrs. Hoſkins loved Louiſa, who had endeared herſelf to her and others by uniform civility and mildneſs of manners. When ſhe was diſpleaſed with a ſervant, it was with reaſon, and ſhe convinced them that it was ſo; but ſhe was free from that caprice which will one hour ſhew itſelf in unmeaning humility, and in a confidence that is out of character, and the next, perhaps, in airs of ſuperiority and ſcorn. Louiſa was ſenſible, and ſhe made uſe of her underſtanding to

correct by degrees the errors that human nature, in its beſt form, muſt be liable to. We muſt, however, now take leave of her, hoping, that, in the courſe of her life, ſhe will find the comfort due to a good and well regulated diſpoſition.

Mrs. Hoſkins returned to her cottage, and ſat herſelf down under the porch, to reflect upon what had paſſed. Her huſband, having the greateſt affection for, and opinion of her, deſired ſhe would act in the affair entirely as ſhe pleaſed, and only hoped it would not end ſo as to give her any uneaſineſs. She locked up the letter as a depoſit which might be of the utmoſt conſequence to her little charge, and even to herſelf; but it now occurred to her, that Louiſa had not ſaid by what name the child ſhould be called beſides Ethelinda. This circumſtance had been forgotten; Mrs. Hoſkins therefore, after ſome deliberation, gave it the name of Claremont, which came into her head, ſhe having once lived with the family of Claremont, in a diſtant part of

of England. She mentioned this in a letter to Louiſa, and, not receiving any anſwer to the contrary, concluded ſhe approved of it.

We ſhall not pretend to mark the firſt two years of Ethelinda's life with any extraordinary event, nor the preſages of any. No ſupernatural power foretold that ſhe would be the wonder of the world. She was a very pretty intereſting girl, as ſenſible as children of that age uſually are; and ſhe ſeemed to be good humoured and lively, but we cannot follow the example of ſome authors, who think it neceſſary to repreſent their heroine quite faultleſs. Our Ethelinda is, in the line of human nature, not exempt from its errors, though we hope free from its vices. When I ſee a character drawn from the imagination of the author, poſſeſſing every virtue and every grace,—not only free from vice, but even the ſhadow of a blemiſh, I laugh at his *imitation of Nature*, and think the fairy tales might as reaſonably paſs for realities. Ethelinda, in our

opinion, will have a right to be ranked in one of the firſt claſſes of improved human nature, and ſhe is not deſtined to ſhine above it.

Mrs. Hoſkins had no children of her own, and ſhe ſoon became warmly attached to her little charge; but ſhe had good ſenſe, and knew that, in managing youthful diſpoſitions, it was much eaſier to correct the faults of a child's temper at an early age, than when they have taken deeper root. She had not ſtudied the works of Rouſſeau; and, if ſhe had, and had underſtood them, would in all probability have laughed at them, as recommending an impracticable ſyſtem of education. She had frequent converſations upon the bringing up of children with her benevolent neighbour, Lady Falkner, who uſed often in her walks to call at the farm, and was pleaſed with the little Ethelinda; ſo much ſo, that ſhe frequently took her home, and kept her for the whole day.

Five

Five years paſſed on without any material occurrence, when the death of Mr. Hoſkins gave the ſevereſt affliction to his wife, who almoſt ſunk under the ſtroke, though ſhe had long apprehended, and fancied herſelf prepared for it. She ſoon after ſent for a little niece of her late huſband's, to be her companion in the abſence of Ethelinda, who was almoſt continually with Lady Falkner. To theſe viſits Mrs. Hoſkins would not object, as ſhe conſidered them greatly for the child's advantage.

Near two years more had elapſed, during which time ſhe had never heard from Louiſa; this gave her great uneaſineſs, but ſhe determined to adhere to her promiſe of not opening the letter till the ſtated period.—Lady Falkner had been very inquiſitive about the parentage of her little favourite, and Mrs. Hoſkins had ſo far ſatisfied her curioſity as to tell her that ſhe knew the mother, but ſhe was not at liberty to ſay who ſhe was, and the name and ſituation of her father had not been revealed to her; but,

if

if four years elapſed without her hearing from either, ſhe had a letter which was then to be opened, containing every neceſſary information.

Lady Falkner was amiable and good; ſhe was benevolent from nature, and religious from principle. She was the widow of Lord Falkner, who, dying without any near relation, had left her a very large fortune at her own diſpoſal, with the beautiful houſe and grounds called Newton-hall. — Lady Falkner was ſiſter to Sir James Corbet, who was a ſenſible man, but too indolent to reſiſt his wife's inclination for governing; and, as the love of power is an increaſing paſſion, it grew upon her ladyſhip ſo much, that Sir James had for a long time yielded almoſt implicit obedience to her commands. In converſation he generally maintained his own opinions, but in active life, he ſuffered his underſtanding to be ſubſervient to Lady Cecilia Corbet's inclinations, who, being extremely artful, was contented to let him have his own will

in

in argument, ſo that he acted according to her's.

Lady Cecilia Corbet was daughter to the late Earl of Weſtville, and ſiſter to the preſent Earl, with whom ſhe had quarrelled; a circumſtance at the time immaterial to her, as he was then a younger brother.—Money was her idol. She had one ſon and one daughter. Mr. Corbet had been educated in the moſt faſhionable ſtile. From a public ſchool he went for two years to the Univerſity; attended by a private tutor,—having a tolerable underſtanding, he had got through his exerciſes at Eton in the common way, and was therefore not deficient in uſual ſchool-learning; but, as he felt no voluntary diſpoſition to improve his mind, his mornings at college were chiefly ſpent in riding and walking, his evenings with companions not ſelected for their knowledge, ſteadineſs, or ſobriety. The only ſtudy for which he ſhewed an inclination was muſic, and he played the flute with ſome taſte and execution; but he did not underſtand

ſtand that a gentleman ſhould be well acquainted both with modern and ancient hiſtory, and that it is not quite ſufficient for him to know that the houſes of Bourbon and Valois once gave kings to France, and the Stuarts and the illuſtrious houſe of Brunſwick kings to England. He did not feel that a man of family and fortune has as many calls upon him to improve his underſtanding, in order to become uſeful and important to ſociety, as a perſon in an inferior line. He thought (if he thought at all upon the ſubject) that a man, born to large poſſeſſions, has a right to be as idle as he pleaſes;—that he comes into the world only to amuſe himſelf, and is at liberty to waſte his time in the manner that is moſt agreeable to him. It is therefore no wonder that Mr. Corbet went abroad very little the better for what he had learned at Cambridge, and returned very little improved by his travels. It is true, he could harangue for ever upon the beauties of the picture-gallery at Verſailles, and the Vatican at Rome. He was acquainted too with the common cuſtoms and

and manners of the people both in France and Italy; — ſo far, as when and in what manner they dine and ſup, at what hour the theatres begin, when they end, and how each nation dreſſes. Mr. Corbet was perfect in ſuch ſort of knowledge, but the moral and political conduct of either nation, their effects and cauſes, their different diſpoſitions, &c. &c. he never thought of inveſtigating.

However, ſuch as he was, he returned from abroad the pride and delight of his mother; — a mother, who had not good principles enough of her own to inſtill any into her ſon; and his father, being too indolent to give himſelf trouble about ſuch trifles, Mr. Corbet was left to take his chance for every valuable qualification of the heart. He had a good perſon, gentleman-like manners, a great deal of ſmall talk, and for his principles, they were very accommodating. He was not a glaring, a profeſſed libertine, becauſe he had diſcernment ſufficient to know that it is always a

reprobated

reprobated character, but he had no ſcruples to prevent him from being a thorough one in practice.

Miſs Corbet's perſon was tolerably good, rather ſhort than tall, with black eyes, and a good complexion. In the opinion of Lady Cecilia, ſhe was a beauty; and, in that of leſs partial judges, was generally thought pretty. She was what the world calls well educated; that is, ſhe played,—ſhe ſung,—ſhe danced, and ſpoke French fluently: ſhe had a turn for reading, but ſhe always ſelected books that pleaſed her fancy, without ſeeking from them either knowledge or improvement; but, as it is ſcarcely poſſible to read the moſt trifling publication without deriving ſome advantage from it, ſo ſhe received a degree of improvement, without aiming to do ſo, and this enabled her to deliver her opinions, upon many occaſions, better than ſhe otherwiſe would have done. Miſs Corbet was poſſeſſed of fifteen thouſand pounds, left her by an aunt: her father declared he would add ten more, and ſhe

ſhe had conſiderable expectations from Lady Falkner. Her temper was naturally haughty, and inclined to inſolence; ſhe frequently compared her ſituation with that of others, but, inſtead of feeling the impulſe of gratitude for the diſtinction and privilege ſhe enjoyed, her reflections ended in a conceited ſuperiority, which ſerved only to increaſe her pride.

Such were Miſs Corbet and her family. They lived about thirty-one miles from Newton-hall, and uſed to come to town two or three times in a year, to make Lady Falkner a viſit. They had ſeveral times ſeen Ethelinda, but, after having ſlightly inquired who ſhe was, took no further notice of her. Ethelinda was now ſeven years old, and had gained ſo much upon the affections of Lady Falkner, that ſhe ſpent the greateſt part of her time with her.

She was juſt going home, after an abſence of three days, when an account came to Lady Falkner of Mrs. Hoſkins being extremely

extremely ill of the ſmall pox, and of the worſt ſort. The poor woman had always dreaded that diſtemper, and, being poſſeſſed with an idea that ſhe ſhould not recover, ſhe ſent for her ſiſter, Hannah Jones, to whoſe care ſhe committed Ethelinda, according to the directions ſhe originally received; at the ſame time delivering her the letter, and making her give a ſolemn promiſe not to open it till two years more had elapſed. She did not even tell her who was Ethelinda's mother, but aſſured her that the letter would give full information on the ſubject. Scarcely was this important buſineſs done, when Mrs. Hoſkins became delirious, and continued ſo till her death, which happened in a few days. The child likewiſe, whom ſhe had taken as a companion ſince the death of her huſband, ſhared the ſame fate. Ethelinda eſcaped the diſtemper, by happening to be with Lady Falkner, with whom ſhe continued until Mrs. Jones had in ſome degree recovered from her grief, occaſioned by the death of her ſiſter.

Hannah

Hannah Jones had naturally a good heart and diſpoſition, but was much inferior to her ſiſter in other reſpects, having had fewer advantages. From want of education, ſhe was ignorant and ſuperſtitious. She meant to be perfectly honeſt, nevertheleſs, thoſe ſhe looked up to might not, perhaps, have found much difficulty in betraying her into a diſhoneſt action, for which, when made ſenſible of its atrocity, ſhe would have half broken her heart. She was very talkative, but, though weak, by no means a fool,—had a ſtrong ſenſe of religion, and was a predeſtinarian, with an opinion that Providence interfered in the minuteſt circumſtances of her daily concerns. She was of a very inquiſitive turn, and was particularly anxious to know who Ethelinda was.

Withheld by the ſolemn promiſe ſhe had made her ſiſter, ſhe ventured not to think of opening the letter before the appointed time, though we are inclined to believe that Lady Falkner might eaſily have perſuaded her that it would be right to do ſo.

"Well,"

"Well," ſhe would often ſay to her huſband, "it does run ſtrongly in my mind, that this Thelinda will turn out ſome great lady,—may be a ducheſs; and then, Thomas, who knows what may be done for us; not but I'm ſure, if we never gets a farthing by her, ſhe is heartily welcome to all as we can do, ſhe is ſo ſweet a child;—but for the matter of that, I dare be ſworn Lady Falkner will never let her want for any thing, for I think ſhe loves her all as one as if ſhe was her own." "And now you mention that," replied Thomas, "who knows but ſhe may turn out ſome kin to her." "Very true," replied Hannah; "ſtranger things have come to paſs;—and I have dreamed ſo much lately of meeting flocks of ſheep, that I may think there is ſomething good coming: I ſaid ſo to Kitty yeſterday. Well, thank heaven! the letter will be opened tomorrow ſix weeks; but I would'nt open it a day before the time for all the world. I ſhould be ſo afeard of my poor ſiſter's ghoſt, I ſhould never get a wink

wink of ſleep; but I am certain my lady will be as glad as I ſhall to ſee the inſide, for ladies have always as much curioſity as poor folk, for what I ſees, Thomas."

We will not juſt now examine into the juſtice of Mrs. Jones's remark, but only obſerve that we have ſeen it verified; and, in the preſent inſtance, we cannot deny Lady Falkner's being to the full as anxious as Hannah. We have no doubt but ſhe believed, if ſhe examined into the motive of it, that her anxiety aroſe entirely from a deſire of ſerving the child, by finding out to whom ſhe belonged; and, perhaps, it was the preponderating reaſon. Still it is certain, that people frequently miſtake ſo far, as to imagine they are actuated by one motive, when perhaps, in reality, they are influenced by its very oppoſite. But we do not here mean to be ſevere againſt curioſity, and are willing to compliment that ſpirit ſo far, as to acknowledge that, when properly applied, it has been of very great ſervice to the world; that it often leads to beneficial

beneficial effects, and to many uſeful diſcoveries.—But to return to our hiſtory, which we will do in the next chapter.

CHAP. II.

Which contains a great Diſappointment.

ETHELINDA continued living as uſual between Lady Falkner and the Jones's. One night, when ſhe was with the latter, they were alarmed by a fire, which broke out in a wood-houſe adjoining to their dwelling. Having very little aſſiſtance, and leſs water, the houſe, and every thing in it, was entirely conſumed in a ſhort time, and the whole family found themſelves in a field, without

without having ſaved any thing but the ſlight clothing they had haſtily put on. Their diſtreſs and loſs were both very great; but Jones and his wife ſoon ſet their betters an example, worthy of imitation, in their manner of bearing their misfortune. They went immediately to Newton-hall. Lady Falkner was greatly ſhocked when ſhe heard what had happened, but drew comfort from the circumſtance of no lives being loſt, and endeavoured to make them do the ſame.

"To be ſure, as your ladyſhip ſays," returned Hannah, "it is a great mercy we are not all burnt alive, and Providence is very good, that I ſhould happen to be awake juſt when I was, and I had the hardeſt matter that could be to wake poor Thomas — bleſs me, I ſaw ſuch a light, as I thought the whole houſe was in a flame, ſo I jumpt out of bed, and to be ſure was ſo ſcared, that I hardly knowed what I did; but I called Thomas, over and over again, as loud as I could, ſeveral times before he heard me; and then, pour ſoul, he was all aghaſt,

and didn't know what he did; and for a moment, to be ſure, we had forgot the child, but ſoon bethought ourſelves of it; and it was a wonder that my little maid Kitty was not loſt, for, as ſhe lay in t'other room, we could hardly make her underſtand what was the matter. I am ſure, when we were all ſtanding in the field, and ſeeing our poor houſe burnt, I felt quite happy at the 'ſcape we had; but now I come to think, heaven help us! I don't know what we ſhall do." "You will find friends, I have no doubt," replied Lady Falkner, "and for the preſent you ſhall remain here."

It was not for ſome hours after, that the letter of ſuch conſequence to Ethelinda was thought of. Her loſs was unqueſtionably the greateſt, but her tender age prevented her from taking any immediate concern in it. Mrs. Jones, much as ſhe was engroſſed by her own calamity, no ſooner thought of Ethelinda's, than, flying to Lady Falkner, ſhe exclaimed, "O my lady, the letter, the letter!" —"What letter?" anſwered Lady Falkner, for

r an inſtant, not recollecting the circum-
ance. " O my lady, the letter! — Miſs
helinda's letter!—Oh! as ſure as we're
orn 'tis burnt; for it was in the little box
y poor ſiſter kept it in; and that, and
very thing in the room, is deſtroyed. —
Vell, it is to be ſure a ſhocking thing, and
e now ſhall never know who Miſs Thelin-
a is.—It was to have been opened ſo ſoon
oo!" Lady Falkner in a moment felt the
orce of the loſs which the poor child had
uſtained. " Moſt unfortunate, indeed!"
ried ſhe; " Poor Ethelinda! in this in-
ance, I fear, it is not in my power to aſ-
ſt you." " Begging your ladyſhip's par-
on, for giving my poor opinion," ſaid
annah, " I think the only thing is adver-
ſing Miſs in all the newſpapers." " Every
ing," returned Lady Falkner, " ſhall be
one, likely to be of any uſe;" and, indeed,
e entered into the misfortune very ſin-
erely, and with every mark of affection to-
ards the child. She conſidered it as an
vent that blackened all Ethelinda's proſ-
ects, who, from being, perhaps, the ac-

knowledged heireſs to honours and fortu
was now left deſtitute, and almoſt witho
friends.

The ſweet child was entering the room
ſhe made theſe reflections, and innocen
aſked her to take a walk, and look at t
ſad ruins of their cottage. Tears ſtart
into Lady Falkner's eyes, while pity wru
her heart, and, kiſſing the child, ſhe d
clared, that, as long as ſhe lived, ſhe ſhou
never want a friend. Mr. Jones had
wealthy uncle in Devonſhire, upon who
he had conſiderable dependence, who ha
often urged him to live near him. To th
relation he now ſent an account of his lo
and in a few days received an anſwer, deſi
ing that he would remove into Devo
ſhire as ſoon as poſſible, and fix in a ſma
farm near him. Jones and his wife therefo
determined to ſet out immediately, bu
Lady Falkner could not bear the thought
of parting with Ethelinda, who was mo
endeared to her from the recent misfortune.

Th

The Jones's were to ſet out in a few days, d Lady Falkner determined to take Ethe- nda to live with her entirely, and repre- nted to Mrs. Jones the advantage it would to the child, as ſhe ſhould bring her up ſuch a manner as would qualify her for y rank of life that ſhe might hereafter be lled upon to fill, and ſhe promiſed to take ery method that offered any proſpect of ſcovering who her parents were. "I am re," replied Hannah, "I can't poſſibly t ſee that what your ladyſhip ſays is very ue; and, though I ſhall be almoſt bro- n-hearted to part with Miſs Thelinda, I love her, and ſo does Thomas, as if e was our own child, yet, as it is ſo much r her own good, it would be very wrong me to make objections, and, 'ſpecially, your ladyſhip is ſo good as to ſay as how ſhall hear from her;—and then, to be re, it is not in our power to give her rning, and ſo forth; and it would be, to ſure, a ſad thing, if her parents ſhould ever me to light, for her to be brought up ſo uch beneath herſelf, as one may ſay; and,

as Thomas ſays, every thing is for the beſt, and who knows what may turn out." Lady Falkner aſſured her ſhe was perfectly right in reſigning the child to her care, of which Hannah was ſoon fully convinced, though ſhe was very ſincerely ſorry to part with her.

Things being thus ſettled, Mrs. Jones ſoon after took a reſpectful leave of Lady Falkner, (from whom ſhe received a handſome preſent,) and an affectionate farewell of Ethelinda, deſiring that ſhe might ſoon hear from her. Ethelinda hung about Mrs. Jones, and, though ſhe was happy to ſtay with Lady Falkner, and would have made that choice if ſhe had been left to decide, yet ſhe felt much more than could be expected from a child of nine years old, when the moment of ſeparation arrived. It was many hours after Hannah was gone, before the feeling little heart of Ethelinda allowed her any tranquillity.

Lady Falkner had too much tenderneſs in her own nature to be diſpleaſed with this proof

proof of it in her young charge, and, inſtead of checking it, encouraged a ſenſibility that ſhe conſidered as flowing from gratitude and affection, and regarded as the opening bloſſom of virtue. She now became very attentive to the education of Ethelinda, and engaged the beſt maſters at York to teach her writing, reading, muſic, and dancing.

A clergyman, who reſided within a mile of Lady Falkner's, was indebted to her ladyſhip for the living he poſſeſſed. He was a man of a good education, but, till noticed by Lady Falkner, had been left almoſt without preferment, becauſe he would not ſacrifice his principles, by indulging the vices of his pupils. This clergyman, whoſe name was Hall, was no ſooner informed of Lady Falkner's intentions with regard to Ethelinda, than he offered himſelf as her inſtructor in Engliſh, French, and Italian.

Mr. Hall was the younger ſon of a man of ſmall fortune. From the early propenſity he diſcovered for knowledge, it had been

determined to give him a claſſical education; from a public ſchool he went to the Univerſity, where he was ſoon eſteemed one of the beſt ſcholars in it, and his character ſtood ſo high, that, ſoon after his taking orders, a nobleman of great fortune and conſequence engaged him to travel with his two ſons as their tutor. The young men were every thing that was diſſipated. From the pride and obſtinacy which they ſoon diſcovered, Mr. Hall had little reaſon to hope he ſhould be able to correct vices and bad habits which had never yet been oppoſed: In vain did he ſtrive to convince them, that men, who are placed in exalted ſtations, have abundantly more duties to fulfil than if they lived in the more humble walks of life: but in vain did Mr. Hall argue; no religious principle nor moral virtue had a place in their hearts. They took a diſlike to him. How, indeed, could ſuch oppoſites agree? At laſt, finding that he could not make the leaſt impreſſion upon their minds, or the leaſt alteration in their conduct, he deſired to return home.

Their

Their father oppoſed that meaſure very violently, and Mr. Hall perſevering in it, this great and juſt nobleman was ſo much offended, as to think himſelf abſolved from a promiſe he had voluntarily made, of giving him a living, the preſentation to which was ſoon after vacant. Mr. Hall, with conſcious integrity, returned to Cambridge, and continued there, till, having had a ſmall living given to him by one of the Colleges, and its ſituation happening to be near Lady Falkner's, ſhe ſoon became acquainted with the excellence of his character, and, in a few years after, gave him the living he then poſſeſſed.

Mr. Hall had from early youth accuſtomed himſelf to regard this life only as an introduction to a better. He conſidered it therefore as madneſs to ſet the pleaſures of it in competition with the hopes of eternal happineſs. Impreſſed with ſuch ideas, his firſt care was to implant the principles of religion into Ethelinda's mind. He taught her to contemn all the allurements of the

world, when they militated againſt thoſe ſacred principles which he laid down as the guides of her conduct; and he convinced her that no temporary advantages could bear any compariſon with thoſe ſhe ſhould hope for hereafter.

The mind of Ethelinda was ſuſceptible to a ſuperior degree; her underſtanding ſoon led her to feel the force of what he ſaid, and the ſtability of her diſpoſition and temper imprinted it upon her mind; and ſhe could argue as well upon religion, and ſupport her way of thinking with as much ſtrength of reaſon upon that as upon any other ſubject,—a part of education not always attended to in young ladies. Ethelinda made rapid improvements in every kind of accompliſhment, and Lady Falkner, whoſe attachment to her increaſed every hour, beheld with parental ſatisfaction the now fortunate and promiſing child of her bounty.

Eight years paſſed on without any particular event, during which time Lady Falkner

ner took various methods to diſcover Ethelinda's parents, but her endeavours were totally unſucceſsful. We muſt now, however, pay ſome attention to the Corbet family, which we ſhall do in the next chapter.

CHAP. III.

Which ſhews the baneful Tendency of ill-regulated Paſſions.

SIR James and Lady Cecilia Corbet had been ſo ſtruck with the advantages their elegant ſon had derived from travelling, that they reſolved to make the tour of Europe themſelves, in order to afford Miſs Corbet an opportunity of becoming equally accom-

pliſhed with her brother. Mr. Corbet attended them. They were abſent near four years. The firſt viſit they made after their return was to Lady Falkner, and Mr. Corbet, immediately upon his arrival in England, and previous to the viſit made by his family, had been to ſee his aunt. They had known, ſometime before they left England, that Ethelinda lived with her, and by no means approved of it; but, when Lady Cecilia diſcovered the warmth of her ſiſter's attachment, jealouſy took poſſeſſion of her breaſt. However, ſhe determined to be paſſive awhile, (as ſhe had no preſent remedy,) and wait for ſome favourable opportunity of undermining the little upſtart, as ſhe was graciouſly pleaſed to call her. She was terribly chagrined at finding Ethelinda (in ſpite of all her prejudice) a moſt beautiful young creature, with an excellent underſtanding, very highly cultivated, and that ſhe was accompliſhed in a very ſuperior degree. She had read to great advantage, Mr. Hall having directed her ſtudies, and taken pleaſure in explaining to her as ſhe

ſhe went through them. She was perfect miſtreſs of French and Italian, and her genius for muſic was uncommon,—her voice ſingularly fine and affecting; her temper might be called excellent, but may not be deemed faultleſs, when we are obliged to own that ſhe was, if the expreſſion may be allowed, too *ſenſitive*, too much alive to ſudden impreſſions of approbation and diſlike,—felt the trifling circumſtances of life too forcibly, and would be affected at little incidents, to which other people would be indifferent; and ſentiments, that would paſs unregarded in general, would touch her deeply. Her heart was too tender, — her feelings too acute, and ſhe entered too forcibly into the miſeries of others to be long happy herſelf; and ſuch was her tenderneſs of nature, that the leaſt barbarity ſhewn even to the brute creation pierced her heart, and excited her abhorrence. She was by no means indiſcriminate in her attachments. When ſhe liked, it was with enthuſiaſm, and the greateſt perſonal attractions had no charms for her, if not accompanied with goodneſs

goodneſs of heart. She could exert a great deal of warmth upon ſome occaſions, was very tenacious of not giving offence, but did not receive it with indifference.

Such was Ethelinda at ſixteen years of age. She loved Lady Falkner with a mixture of gratitude and affection; ſhe revered her as a pattern of excellence, and loved her as the perſon to whom ſhe was indebted for every thing. The impenetrable obſcurity in which her birth was wrapped, often raiſed painful reflections in Ethelinda's mind, which, being perceived by Lady Falkner, ſhe mentioned the ſubject as little as poſſible, though ſhe conſtantly inſinuated to her houſhold that Miſs Claremont was a young woman of faſhion; for Lady Falkner knew human nature well enough to be aware how much our reſpect towards others depends on our ideas of their importance. The ſervants, except the houſekeeper, univerſally loved Ethelinda, particularly Mrs. Manſel, Lady Falkner's own woman, who had lived with her many years, and was the daughter

of a clergyman, who, dying ſuddenly, had left a family that with him loſt their maintenance. Mrs. Manſel was an amiable woman: ſhe was very much attached to Ethelinda, and Ethelinda had a very ſincere eſteem for her.

The houſekeeper was artful, deceitful, and jealous of Mrs. Manſel. She was ever endeavouring to penetrate into the views of thoſe about her, and watchful for the opportunity of turning them to her own advantage. She imagined Lady Cecilia was in her heart no friend to Ethelinda, becauſe ſhe felt that in her ſituation ſhe ſhould not have been ſo, and ſhe had diſcernment enough to have made obſervations which confirmed that opinion.

Sir James Corbet, Lady Cecilia, Mr. and Miſs Corbet, were now on a viſit at Newton-hall. Lady Falkner received them with kindneſs, but they were not any of them ſo entirely ſuited to her diſpoſition, as to create that ſort of pleaſure which reſults

from the intercourſe of correſponding minds. They were ſtudiouſly civil and attentive, but it was the reſult of intereſt more than affection; and Lady Falkner ſaw, in her neareſt relations, ſuch diſpoſitions as would have prevented her from making any intimacy with them, had they not been united to her by the ties of blood; ſhe, nevertheleſs, thought herſelf obliged to yield ſo far to the tyranny of cuſtom, as to beſtow her fortune and favours upon thoſe ſhe neither loved nor reſpected. Lady Cecilia had ſenſe enough very ſoon to diſcover the difference between attentions that ariſe from real or aſſumed affection. She ſaw the former in Lady Falkner's conduct towards Ethelinda, and the latter in her conduct to her own family. No wonder then that the flames of jealouſy, which had long ſince been kindled in Lady Cecilia's boſom, now burnt with redoubled rage. She reſolved to leave no ſtep untried that could lead to the undermining of Ethelinda in Lady Falkner's affection, but ſhe poſſeſſed too much art to let

let theſe flames blaze forth, or her intention become apparent to any one.

Though the virtues of Sir James Corbet were rather of the negative than the active kind, he would not only have highly diſapproved, but have totally condemned any arts that ſeemed to be diſhoneſt; ſhe therefore thought it much better not to have any of his ſcruples to combat, as ſhe was determined they ſhould not baffle her deſigns. She therefore thought ſtrict caution neceſſary, and, as things were at preſent circumſtanced, ſhe had no immediate proſpect of being able to undermine this univerſal favourite, this all-accompliſhed Miſs Claremont.

It was the month of June, a ſeaſon in which Lady Falkner ſaw a good deal of company; the families, who reſided within the diſtance of a day's viſit, now frequently met together. Ethelinda's beauty and accompliſhments had been ſome time much talked of in the country, but the immediate neighbourhood

neighbourhood was not large, and there did not happen to be a great many ſingle young men of fortune among them. The principal perſon under that deſcription was a Mr. Benfield. He was between twenty and thirty, had an eſtate of near two thouſand a year, a tolerable perſon, and his manners were neither captivating nor diſguſting. He was juſt returned from abroad, where he had been acquainted with Mr. Corbet, and therefore took the firſt opportunity of paying a viſit at Newton-hall, and introduced a Sir Richard Stanmore, who was a relation of his, and then on a viſit at his houſe.

The gentlemen came early, and Mr. Corbet propoſed ſhewing them the park, which was extenſive, and much admired for its venerable woods and great diverſity of proſpects.

Mr. Benfield enquired what viſitors were in the houſe with Lady Falkner. "Only my family, (replied Mr. Corbet,) and I begin to grow ſo damned tired of the party, that

that I ſhall ſoon ſeek for amuſement elſewhere." The other gentlemen did not ſeem ſurpriſed at this reſolution, and proved, by their ſubſequent diſcourſe, that no perſons ſo ſeldom meet with real amuſement as thoſe who are conſtantly in purſuit of it.

They were ſtanding to contemplate a beautiful near view, when their attention was called off by the ſight of two ladies on horſeback. "Whom have we here?" cried Sir Richard; "who is that beautiful creature?"—The ladies advanced ſo rapidly, that Mr. Corbet had not time to make any other anſwer than by introducing the gentlemen to Miſs Corbet and Miſs Claremont; and, after a ſhort converſation, the ladies went home to dreſs. The gentlemen attended them to the houſe, and afterwards proceeded on their ride. The moment they were gone, Mr. Benfield rallied his friend upon his declaration of finding the country ſo damn'd dull, while in the houſe with ſo bewitching a girl as Miſs Claremont; to which Mr. Corbet replied, "that damn'd dull

it

it certainly was, for all that; for he could diſcover no ſuch violent charms in Miſs Claremont, though he acknowledged her to be a good fine girl; but ſhe was a Puritan, and he ſuppoſed a Methodiſt, for ſuch he believed his aunt," though he would have found himſelf rather puzzled to explain the principles of a Methodiſt, had that taſk been enjoined him. "But who the devil is this Miſs Claremont?" demanded Sir Richard. "That is much more than I, or I believe any body elſe, can tell you," replied Mr. Corbet; "ſhe is nobody, belongs to nobody, and nobody can tell you any thing about her: ſhe may be a princeſs, or the bantling of a beggar; in ſhort, all I can ſay for certain is, that ſhe has long been my aunt's *protégée*;"—"and that ſhe is a deviliſh fine girl!" rejoined Sir Richard. "Some people may think ſo," anſwered Mr. Corbet; "ſhe does not happen exactly to ſuit my taſte." Mr. Benfield ſaid but little, and the converſation changed to other ſubjects, though this was often renewed in the courſe of their ride.

The

The company were all aſſembled in the drawing-room, waiting the ſummons for dinner, before Ethelinda joined them. On her entrance, ſhe attracted univerſal attention, though from different cauſes. The elegance of her figure and beauty faſcinated the men. Sir Richard, though converſing at that inſtant with Miſs Corbet, flew to ſet Ethelinda a chair. Mr. Benfield as if involuntarily did the ſame. Miſs Corbet ſurveyed her from head to foot, and hid, under a forced ſmile, the bitter pang of envy.

"My dear Ethelinda, (ſaid Lady Falkner,) I was very uneaſy at your riding ſo long this hot day, eſpecially as you have not been quite well." "I am very ſorry you were uneaſy on my account, madam; but I find myſelf ſo much better, that I thought I might venture to ride, and was induced to go rather farther than I at firſt intended, by wiſhing to ſhew Miſs Corbet the valley I ſo much admire." "Why then, my dear, you have rode above twelve miles in this broiling ſun?" "Dear ma'am, (cried Miſs

Miſs Corbet,) I dare ſay our ride has done Miſs Claremont no ſort of harm: ſhe does not look at all the worſe for it." "If we may judge by looks, (ſaid Mr. Benfield,) it is impoſſible Miſs Claremont can have ſuffered." "And were thoſe looks to ſuffer in the ſlighteſt degree, (cried Sir Richard,) though they might bear a good deal of injury, and yet be very miſchievous, I am ſure it would be a matter of general concern." "Pray, aunt, (exclaimed Miſs Corbet,) have you ſeen the new horſe my brother has juſt purchaſed?" I am no judge of horſes, (replyed Lady Falkner, with a ſmile,) but if it ſuits my nephew I ſhall be glad of it, as I believe he has been rather unlucky in his horſe-dealing lately."

The dinner was announced, which put an end to this intereſting converſation, and Sir Richard Stanmore handed Lady Cecilia into the eating parlour; Mr. Benfield drew back to conduct Ethelinda, and placed himſelf next to her at table, and was ſoon convinced by her converſation that ſhe poſſeſſed a mind

a mind as elegant as her perſon. He was completely faſcinated; and, when the ladies quitted the room, declared that ſhe was altogether the loveliеſt woman he had ever ſeen. Again he enquired concerning her hiſtory, and was ſo very inquiſitive, that the reſt of the gentlemen rallied him ſo unmercifully upon his ſudden paſſion, that at length they laughed him into ſilence. Sir Richard ſwore that he ought not to carry off ſuch a prize without ſome chace, adding, that, although he looked upon matrimony as a curſed pill, ſuch a girl might tempt a man to ſwallow it, eſpecially if it were well gilt; but, even with ſuch a woman, caſh was too neceſſary an ingredient to be neglected. Sir James Corbet entirely concurred with the latter part of this opinion. Mr. Corbet ſtarted another ſubject, and puſhed the bottle round ſo briſkly, that the gentlemen's ſpirits were conſiderably elevated when they adjourned to the drawing-room.

Sir Richard Stanmore was a man of very large fortune, of a very old baronet's family, and

and in himſelf what many women would admire. He was handſome, lively, and well bred in every particular but one, which was a habit of ſwearing, that rendered his converſation at times very diſguſting, and particularly ſo to women of any delicacy. He was a man of pleaſure, but not a profeſſed libertine: he was paſſionate; and, though he would ſometimes be expenſive, he had in general an attention to money, that not only prevented him from ruining himſelf, but gave a ſtrong indication, that, as he grew older, and his other paſſions cooled, avarice would become the prevailing propenſity of his mind. He knew that Miſs Corbet was rich, and would be richer, and he entered Newton-hall with ſome wandering ideas of attaching himſelf to that lady, but the ſight of one ſo much ſuperior could not fail of operating upon a mind very open to the impreſſions of beauty, and he wiſhed to find Ethelinda's fortune as tempting as her perſon; but the obſcurity of her hiſtory, though he ſtill did juſtice to her charms, operated like electricity upon his

his feelings; and, if he did not think again of Miſs Corbet, he reſolved not to entertain a ſerious idea of Miſs Claremont.

The wine had rather deranged theſe prudent reſolutions, and the ſight of ſo much beauty aſſiſted its operations, ſo that, when Sir Richard went to drink coffee with the ladies, he took his ſtation cloſe to Miſs Claremont. Miſs Corbet loved admiration to exceſs. She had indeed a ſtrong preference for a gentleman ſhe had met with abroad, who was a relation of her's, but with whom, from a variety of accidents, ſhe had but few interviews. He was every way worthy of her regard, and he had promiſed, upon his return to England, to make Langley-park a very early viſit. But, though ſhe gave him the preference to all other men, ſhe could not be indifferent to the charms of admiration. She was accuſtomed to be careſſed and courted, and, having generally found herſelf the principal object in the picture, ſhe could ill endure to be placed in the back ground: — this was to be borne

little better than total neglect, and her wounded vanity ſoon conſpired, with the other reaſons ſhe had, for diſliking Ethelinda.

As Miſs Corbet was leſs verſed in artifice than Lady Cecilia, though not leſs inclined to be artful, ſhe ſometimes betrayed marks of envy when ſhe would have wiſhed to conceal them. She would not ſeriouſly have accepted any offers that Mr. Benfield, or even Sir Richard Stanmore could have made her, becauſe ſhe was in reality attached to her couſin; but, as we before obſerved, admiration had charms for her, if the admirer had none; and ſhe could not bear to ſee that incenſe beſtowed upon another, which ſhe always conſidered as her due, and her heart ſmarted at the pointed preference now given to Miſs Claremont. Mr. Benfield on one ſide, and Sir James on the other, were pouring forth a profuſion of compliments to that young lady, while ſhe was much more pained than pleaſed, which Lady Falkner obſerving, ſhe deſired Sir Richard to perſuade

perſuade Miſs Corbet to ſing. He aroſe to obey her, when Miſs Corbet, with an air of pique, begged he would not give himſelf the trouble of endeavouring to perſuade her, for ſhe had got a cold, and could not ſing; but, ſhe added, if it were Lady Falkner's requeſt, ſhe would certainly play a leſſon, and, getting up immediately, ſeated herſelf at the harpſichord.

She performed very well, and received ſo much applauſe, that it would have brought back her good humour, had not Lady Falkner deſired Miſs Claremont to ſing, who inſtantly complied. The tone of her voice moſt particularly harmonious, drew every body round the inſtrument, and a profound ſilence enſued till ſhe had done. Plaudits then broke forth, ariſing almoſt to rapture; but when, at Lady Falkner's requeſt, ſhe ſhewed her ſkill on the harp, the gentlemen's praiſes were ſo expreſſive, that Miſs Corbet could not bear them with any degree of temper; and, on being aſked whether ſhe played the harp, pettiſhly anſwered, "No, indeed!

I diſlike the inſtrument; 'tis extremely inferior to the harpſichord, and not worth one's attention." Sir Richard ſaid, that played only tolerably, he thought it a delightful inſtrument, but, as Miſs Claremont played, quite a divine one. Miſs Corbet, colouring, retorted, that people's ſentiments differed; and, riſing from her chair, left the room. Lady Falkner then propoſed a walk in the garden, and that tea ſhould be ordered in a temple at the end of a fine piece of water in the grounds, which, being readily agreed to, Miſs Corbet was ſummoned, and the party ſet off. Mr. Corbet was in an unpleaſant humour; the wine he had drunk, inſtead of exhilirating his ſpirits, made him churliſh, and he was diſpoſed to quarrel with every thing. When he drank more than uſual, his natural diſpoſition appeared, — ſtripped of the veil which his art uſually threw over it; but it was very ſeldom he was ſo unguarded before Lady Falkner.

As they were paſſing a ſmall cottage, a little dog flew out, and barked at a dog of

Mr. Corbet's. He immediately took up a ſtone, and, flinging it with violence, broke the poor animal's leg. The cries of the little creature were exceſſive. Miſs Claremont exclaimed, "What a cruel thing you have done!" and flew towards the dog. "I'll cure him preſently," cried Mr. Corbet; and, taking the poor dog by the neck, threw it with ſuch force into the water, that it ſeemed impoſſible in ſo maimed a condition for the wretched animal to ſave itſelf. Miſs Claremont was in an agony. She begged with great earneſtneſs that the other gentlemen would ſave the dog. Mr. Corbet ſaying they ſhould not ſave it, ſhe daſhed inſtantaneouſly towards a boat that was faſtened to the ſhore, and jumped into it, and was vainly exerting her ſtrength to puſh it off from the bank, when Sir Richard haſtened to her aid, ſaying, he'd be damn'd if he did not try to ſave it. He ſoon ſet the boat afloat, and got hold of the dog. Miſs Claremont no ſooner regained the ſhore, than ſhe burſt into tears, having been very much agitated, and with vehemence told

Mr. Corbet, that ſhe did not think ſo much cruelty had exiſted in human nature, at leaſt ſhe had never been ſo unfortunate as to ſee ſo much before. He made her no reply, but, turning to Sir Richard, ſaid he ſhould know how to thank him for interfering in what was not his concern. Sir Richard anſwered with quickneſs, that he ſhould be ready to receive his thanks whenever he pleaſed.

Lady Falkner, who had walked on before, upon obſerving ſome confuſion, turned back, and, when ſhe underſtood the cauſe, was extremely diſpleaſed with Mr. Corbet; but, attributing his behaviour to the wine he had drunk, endeavoured, with the aſſiſtance of the other gentlemen, to reconcile matters, and at length ſucceeded.

When Sir Richard Stanmore and Mr. Benfield were gone, Mr. Corbet took an opportunity of apologizing to Ethelinda, and added, that he could only account for his ill humour, by confeſſing that he felt too forcibly

forcibly her power of charming every body, and was irritated to find ſhe did not ſhew him the preference he ſo ardently wiſhed to obtain. This was the moſt pointed declarations of his ſentiments that Mr. Corbet had ever made. Though, ſhort as was the date of his intimacy with Ethelinda, he had before contrived to give her hints of the ſame kind; but he had made no favourable impreſſion on her heart; their characters differed in almoſt every particular, and his cruel uſage of the little dog was in itſelf ſufficient to create in her no ſmall degree of diſguſt towards him. She dreaded a further declaration of his ſentiments, not from any heſitation in her own opinion, but fearing that it might be a ſource of uneaſineſs from another cauſe. She had frequently obſerved a wiſh in her beloved benefactreſs to impreſs her mind with favourable ideas of Mr. Corbet; and, in truth, there was nothing Lady Falkner more earneſtly wiſhed than an union between thoſe young people. She had too much diſcernment not

to perceive many of Mr. Corbet's faults, but his vices were unknown to her, and ſhe wiſhed that Ethelinda, whom ſhe loved far beyond any of her own relations, ſhould poſſeſs her fortune; and yet ſhe could not reconcile to her juſtice the giving it to her in preference to them; though ſhe had determined, if ſhe could not bring about this wiſhed-for union, to provide very handſomely for her beloved *protégée*.

Lady Cecilia began to have a ſtrong ſuſpicion of Lady Falkner's deſigns; but envy, jealouſy, and ſuſpicion, had operated in her mind in the natural and uſual way, by making her diſlike the object of them, and her pride added a thouſand reaſons againſt ſuch an alliance for her ſon. Miſs Corbet too would have been ſhocked at the idea of having a *nobody*, a foundling, a child of charity, for her ſiſter; and Mr. Corbet, though paſſionately in love with Ethelinda's perſon, could not bring himſelf to think of marrying her. At preſent, however, he did not dare to make her any other propoſals, but

but he was one of thoſe men who have very little, or rather no opinion of a woman being virtuous from principle. He believed that pride, and the hope of a ſuperior ſituation, were the ground-work of all women's virtue; and, if he could inſpire her with affection towards him, he thought he ſhould ſoon ſurmount every other difficulty, and gain her upon his own terms, and that afterwards, for her own ſake, he might be pretty ſure of her ſecrecy. He obſerved, with chagrin, that, ſince the affair of the dog, Ethelinda had been ſcarcely civil to him; and he curſed the wine, the dog, and the party, that had cauſed him to ſhew ſo much of his bad diſpoſition.

Ethelinda had carried the dog to the cottage, where its leg was ſet. She viſited the poor thing every day, till it grew ſo fond of her, that it was always coming to the Hall, and lying, to watch for her, at the door. Mr. Corbet now pretended great contrition for his brutality, publicly laid the blame on the wine he had drank, affected

violent fondneſs for the dog, and deſired to purchaſe it from the cottager. Ethelinda lamented that the dog ſhould have ſuch a maſter, but did not think it would be right for her openly to object to it. Thus the poor ill-treated animal now became the property, and to appearance the great favourite of Mr. Corbet.

CHAP. IV.

In which our Heroine ſees ſomething of the Manners of the World, without underſtanding them.—Our Readers probably may be more quick-ſighted.

A Fortnight elapſed unmarked by any particular event, for Mr. Corbet ventured not at preſent to renew his declarations of love, and Lady Cecilia was too artful

artful to omit paying every poſſible attention to Miſs Claremont, till the time ſhould arrive when ſhe could attack her with ſome proſpect of ſucceſs. A note now came from Mr. Benfield, to requeſt that Lady Falkner and her friends would honour him with their company at Bly-Lodge, in the following week, as he purpoſed to attempt making up a little dance. Lady Falkner inſiſted upon her family accepting the invitation, though ſhe never went herſelf to ſuch parties, adding, that this would be the firſt ball that Miſs Claremont had ever gone to, excepting thoſe ſhe ſometimes had attended at ſchool.

"La! my dear, (cried Miſs Corbet,) then I ſuppoſe you will be quite delighted to dance with gentlemen inſtead of ladies."

"Indeed, (replied Ethelinda,) I ſhall be quite frightened, for to me it will be very embarraſſing." "Embarraſſing! why ſhould it be more embarraſſing to dance with men than with women?"—"Becauſe I am uſed to the one, and not to the other. "Well,

my dear, I dare ſay you will ſoon get the better of your embarraſſments." "I hope ſo, (replied Lady Falkner,) or ſhe may be prevented from doing that juſtice to her dancing-maſter of which I aſſure you ſhe is capable."

An anſwer of acceptance was returned to Mr. Benfield's invitation, and Lady Falkner deſired Ethelinda to go to York the next day, and get a new dreſs for the occaſion. Nothing material occurred between this time and that when the party ſet out for Bly-Lodge. On their arrival, they found a houſe full of company, among whom were the Earl and Counteſs of Hillſworth, Lady Diana Aſhley, ſiſter to Lord Hillſworth, Captain Aſhley his brother, and Mr. and Mrs. Morgan, who lived in the neighbourhood, and were diſtantly related on his ſide to Sir James Corbet, having no children nor near relations, Lady Cecilia was very civil to them, not knowing to whom he might leave his fortune; and, thinking that four thouſand a year might compenſate

ſate for now and then bearing the coarſe rough manners of the ſquire, and the exceſſive, though vulgar, affectation of his wife.

How ſuch oppoſites as Mr. and Mrs. Morgan ever came together would perhaps, without our aſſiſtance, ſomewhat puzzle our readers; but the wonder will ceaſe when we make it known, that the lady's fortune ſuited the gentleman's father, who, without troubling himſelf about his ſon's inclinations, made up the match. The lady's father acted upon principles equally refined, and the young people were each of them allured by the irreſiſtible bribe of getting rid of an old tyrant, beſides the certainty of a good eſtabliſhment; and, as a farther temptation, he ſecured excellent fox-hounds, and ſhe a coach and ſix: and, although theſe motives may not to many of our readers ſeem at firſt ſight very juſtifiable ones, yet, upon examination, they will be found, where the ſentiments of the parties are not very refined, to have as little illuſion and collu-

ſion

ſion in them as many others, apparently much more ſpecious.

But to return. There were likewiſe at Bly-Lodge a Mr. and Miſs Elford, and two or three ſingle men, and ſeveral other families were expected in the evening to the ball. The party from Newton-Hall did not arrive till it was time for them to dreſs for dinner, and conſequently they did not make their appearance till it was nearly ready. Miſs Corbet had particularly ſtudied her dreſs, and determined, if poſſible, to outſhine our heroine. She appeared with a head-dreſs entirely in a foreign ſtile, a variety of feathers, flowers, &c. Her gown was ſilvered muſlin, ornamented with a profuſion of pink; nor had ſhe forgot to heighten her complexion very conſiderably with rouge, which gave a fierceneſs to her features that was no advantage to them. Miſs Claremont's hair was elegantly, though rather looſely, dreſſed, hung down behind with lilac ribbons, and only a bandeau round her head, with a plume of white feathers; her gown,

gown, white crape with a ſaſh, and looſe ſleeves, tied round with the ſame coloured ribbon. She looked a moſt captivating artleſs figure, and a profound ſilence followed her entrance into the room, for the whole party could not help gazing at her. It was impoſſible that ſhe ſhould not perceive herſelf an object of particular attention, and this gave a glow to her complexion that increaſed her charms.

Lord Hillſworth aſked Mr. Benfield who that divinity was, and deſired that he might be preſented to her, which requeſt Mr. Benfield took an early opportunity of complying with, and his lordſhip begged the honour of her hand for the two firſt dances. He then made her ſo many fine ſpeeches, that ſhe very ſoon heartily wiſhed that ſhe might have had any other partner. At dinner ſhe got rid of his attentions, as his place was near the head, and her's near the bottom of the table. Capt. Aſhley accidentally ſat next her. He was politely attentive, and ſhe ſoon found him by far the moſt agreeable

agreeable young man ſhe had ever converſed with.

They entered into converſation upon various ſubjects, and, though our heroine was very ignorant of the faſhions, and, we might ſay, follies, of the fine world, ſhe was very well verſed in all proper knowledge that books could give her, and did not ſcruple to enter freely into converſation upon ſuch ſubjects as Capt. Aſhley advanced. He enquired if ſhe were fond of muſic, and if ſhe liked the laſt opera. An opera-houſe, ſhe ſaid, was a place ſhe had never been at, but wiſhed to go there very much, as ſhe ſuppoſed ſhe ſhould hear muſic in perfection, though ſhe owned herſelf ſo partial to Handel, that ſhe ſhould prefer going to Weſtminſter-abbey to any other amuſement, and ſhe thought Mr. Bates muſt be ſomething more than mortal, to be able to conduct in ſo perfect a manner ſuch a wonderful performance. Capt. Aſhley ſaid, that indeed, Mr. Bates was a wonderful man; for, beſides his extraordinary powers with regard to muſic,

muſic, he poſſeſſed a very ſuperior underſtanding, with a readineſs of comprehenſion and quickneſs peculiarly his own. "For my part, (cried Lady Diana,) I believe that if it were not ſo much the faſhion to admire the Abbey, not half the people would go there that do: I own I think an opera ſo very ſuperior." "Your ladyſhip is particularly fond of Italian muſic," ſaid Mr. Corbet.—"Why, yes, to be ſure, Italian muſic is vaſtly ſuperior; but it is not ſo much that, as my diſliking the dulneſs and length of that at the Abbey." "Why, ſurely your ladyſhip muſt think the ſight magnificent?" ſaid Mr. Elford. "Yes, for two minutes, till one has looked all round, it is well enough; but the ſitting ſo long, and the hearing the ſame thing over and over again, muſt certainly be to many people very tireſome." "At leaſt, we may judge it is ſo to you, ſiſter," ſaid Capt. Aſhley. "Why, I own I like a great many amuſements better, and ſo do many other people, if they would but tell truth; and yet I ſhall always go there while it is the faſhion."

faſhion." "And would you, madam, (replied Capt. Aſhley, turning to Miſs Claremont,) puniſh yourſelf to ſit five or ſix hours in a place, merely becauſe it is the faſhion?" "At preſent, (replied Miſs Claremont,) I ſhould not, but I cannot anſwer for what I might think, or what I might do, if I lived in the faſhionable world." "I dare ſay, madam, (rejoined Capt. Aſhley,) that you would not act contrary to good ſenſe, wherever you lived."

"Thank you for your compliment, brother, (cried Lady Diana,) but I am uſed to ſuch from you." "If my compliment is a bad one, my dear ſiſter, it is yourſelf, and not I who make it ſuch." "Indeed, (cried Mrs. Morgan,) I am very much of Lady Diana's opinion, and could never ſee ſuch charms in the Abbey as ſome people do, any more than that it is an aſſemblage of people of faſhion, and one meets almoſt every body there." "Rather ſay, you ſee almoſt every body there, Mrs. Morgan," ſaid Mr. Corbet. "Well, ſee them, or meet them

it is all one, as they are there." — "Not exactly, I think, (ſaid Mr. Morgan,) but ladies don't mind trifling diſtinctions; and, for my part, I would rather ſee them than meet them." "Why, don't you love ſociety, Mr. Morgan?" cried Miſs Corbet.— "Yes, ma'am, well enough, but not in Weſtminſter-abbey. "Well, (ſaid Lady Diana,) I ſhould think it quite dreadful to be there, but for the company one meets; it is that which makes the plays and operas abroad ſo delightful:—nobody minds the performance." "As your ladyſhip obſerves, (replied Mr. Morgan,) that muſt be delightful: I ſhould be vaſtly pleaſed with it, I am ſure." "Were you never abroad, Mrs. Morgan?" cried Lady Diana. "O no, ma'am! but I long to go there, and have ſaid every thing I can to perſuade Mr. Morgan to take a little tour." "Faith! that's very true, Deb, (replied the ſquire,) but you muſt firſt perſuade me out of my ſenſes. What the plague ſhould you and I do abroad? why, we ſhould only be laughed at." "And why laughed at, Mr. Morgan?

gan? Is it ſo uncommon a thing to go abroad?" "No, no! (anſwered the ſquire,) it would be much better for old England, if it were a more uncommon thing. I never ſee any good it does any body; there is nonſenſe enough to be learned at home, without going abroad to get more." "But, (ſaid Miſs Corbet, with a ſneer,) it ſometimes gives a poliſh, that makes people much more tolerable." "Yes, (rejoined the ſquire,) and it ſometimes gives impertinent airs, and other things too, which makes ſome people full of conceit, and little better than painted dolls, when they might otherwiſe be civil, wholeſome, and good-humoured girls."

Mrs. Morgan, knowing too well her huſband's diſpoſition towards unbounded frankneſs, grew alarmed, and told him, though he was ſuch an enemy to foreign manners, the generality of the world were very partial to them. "Yes, and a great folly it is, (replied Mr. Morgan.) Is it not abſurd to ſee people, who can hardly make both

both ends meet, and never ſaw half a quarter of their own country, ſet off, forſooth, to ſee Paris. They would not be at half the trouble to viſit their poor relations in Yorkſhire, though they might do good inſtead of miſchief by it." "Oh! (but replied Mrs. Morgan,) you know one's relations one may ſee at any time." "Ah! and if that time never comes, (replied the ſquire,) it isn't what will break many hearts; but thoſe ſilly jaunts abroad are generally the women's doing.—To be ſure, madam likes to talk of her travels, and how near ſhe was being loſt between Calais and Dover; and, though ſhe doesn't ſtay a week t'other ſide the herring-pond, ſhe is always making compariſons of the difference between things here and there. Zounds! Deb, I would not let you have the power of making ſuch a fool of yourſelf, for the beſt pack of hounds in the county." "Indeed, Mr. Morgan, (replied the lady, with a look of indignation,) you are no ſort of judge, but I know it is in vain to attempt to perſuade you, when you are ſet againſt a thing, and ſo I ſha'nt try."—

"And

"And faith! Deb, you are much in the right on't, (retorted the rough ſquire,) for it would be labour in vain."

Lady Cecilia obſerving that the matrimonial argument grew rather too ſpirited, gave a general turn to the converſation. Capt. Aſhley poſſeſſed ſufficient penetration ſoon to diſcover that Miſs Claremont was in many reſpects a very ſuperior young woman, and, though he was an admirer of beauty, and perhaps it might be conſidered by him as a firſt eſſential for the partner in a dance, or in the flirtation of an evening, yet he by no means held it as the greateſt ornament in a woman, and he bowed much lower to the good qualities of the head and heart, than to the moſt ſhining outward appearance; but, where he had reaſon to think them united, he felt an irreſiſtible propenſity to become better acquainted with the object.

He aſked Miſs Claremont to dance. She was engaged for the two firſt to his brother; for the two following ſhe promiſed him;

and, when the ladies withdrew after dinner, he grew impatient for the time when he was again to have the pleaſure of her converſation. After the ladies quitted the dining-parlour, they ſoon formed themſelves into parties. Mrs. Morgan attached herſelf to Lady Diana, and Miſs Corbet; Lady Cecilia to Lady Hillſworth, and Miſs Elford and Miſs Claremont were left together.

There is certainly a ſomething, that, even in an early acquaintance, attach people to each other, who are of a ſimilar diſpoſition; though I am not of opinion with thoſe philoſophers who imagined that every perſon has a ſeparate kind of atmoſphere which attracts or repels others, accordingly as their diſpoſitions agree. It muſt be allowed, however, that the following converſations of the above parties ſhewed pretty ſtrongly the ſimilitude of their ideas.

"My dear Miſs Corbet, (ſaid Lady Diana,) for heaven's ſake tell me who is that Miſs Claremont" "Don't your la'ſhip know

know who ſhe is?" replied Miſs Corbet. "Not I, indeed, (replied Lady Diana.) She ſeems a vaſt favourite with the men, and for my part, I don't ſee any thing in her ſo very handſome;—do you?" "O yes! to be ſure ſhe is handſome, and one ſhould be thought full of envy and malice, if one did not ſay that ſhe was beautiful." "Pray (replied Lady Diana,) did you ever ſee her before?" "See her before! (exclaimed Mrs. Morgan.) O yes! Miſs Corbet has ſeen her before, often enough, hav'n't you, Miſs Corbet?" "O dear, yes! (anſwered that lady,) ſhe is a friend of mine." "A friend of your's! (cried Lady Diana;) I am ſure I beg your pardon for what I have ſaid, but I had not the leaſt idea of ſuch a thing."

"O my dear Lady Diana! you need not beg pardon; you ſaid no harm I am ſure if ſhe were my ſiſter; but I muſt tell you that that young woman—young *lady* I ſhould have ſaid, my aunt, Lady Falkner, has taken from an infant, and brought up like her own." "Bleſs my heart! (exclaimed Lady Diana.

Diana,) is this her that I have heard ſo much about?—Oh! now I know all about it; ſhe has no relations, and nobody knows any thing about her. Well, I declare I thought there was ſomething odd in her looks, ſomething ſolitary and particular; and no wonder, for ſhe muſt feel very queer and ſtrange at belonging to nobody."

"Oh! (replied Miſs Corbet,) your ladyſhip is quite miſtaken there, for ſhe is made ſo much fuſs with, that ſhe has no occaſion to feel ſolitary. She is always treated as the firſt perſon wherever ſhe goes." "Surely, my dear Miſs Corbet, (replied Lady Diana,) but how can you bear that? I own I could not bear to have one don't know who have the preference of me; I am ſure it is a great merit in you not to hate her." "O dear, hate! (replied Miſs Corbet,) I have a great regard for her; I ſhould be very unfaſhionable in this part of the world if I had not." "That, indeed, one ſhould be very ſorry for, (ſaid Mrs. Morgan;) but I wonder how people of faſhion can be ſo fond of they

don't know who." "Oh! there is nothing in that, (ſaid Lady Diana,) for one often makes the moſt fuſs with people one don't know much about,—but then it is becauſe it happens to be the faſhion." "Why, for my part, (anſwered Mrs. Morgan,) I am always very civil to her, becauſe every body elſe is; elſe I can't ſay ſhe is much to my taſte. She ſeems very unlike moſt young women of my acquaintance, and often appears to me quite grave and reſerved, though I ſee ſhe can talk to the men." "O yes! (replied Miſs Corbet,) that ſhe can, I aſſure you, and ſhe is reckoned vaſtly wiſe by them; indeed I have heard that Mr. Hall, who is exceſſively clever, has taken an immenſity of pains to teach her every thing."

"And is ſhe (interrogated Lady Diana) ſo great a favourite with Lady Falkner, as to ſuppoſe ſhe will provide for her?"

"Oh! I have no doubt about it, (anſwered Miſs Corbet,) though I believe nobody knows what my aunt means to do." "Why, I have

have heard, (cried Mrs. Morgan,) but I don't believe it, that ſhe even wiſhes your brother, Mr. Corbet, to marry her; but I am ſure, I hope he'll marry ſomebody that he knows ſomething more about :— I have no notion of ſuch ſort of marriages." "No, (anſwered Lady Diana) I am very ſure, my dear Miſs Corbet, you would not like your brother to marry any body ſo unequal to himſelf. For my part, I ſhould be ſo hurt, I ſhould never ſpeak to her, I am ſure, if I was you, though I think I hav'n't too much pride." "O dear! (replied Miſs Corbet,) I am in no fear of my brother doing any ſuch thing: he has too much proper pride; and, though I have a great regard for her, I muſt own I am not ambitious of having her for a ſiſter."

Juſt then, Miſs Claremont and Miſs Elford entered the room. "My dear Miſs Claremont, (cried Mrs. Morgan,) where have you been ſo long?" "Only to get my maid to mend the trimming of Miſs Elford's gown, which ſhe had torn." "We

thought you very long," ſaid Miſs Corbet. "What! has ſhe a maid of her own?" whiſpered Lady Diana. "O dear, yes! and every thing elſe ſhe can have," replied Miſs Corbet. "Bleſs me! I never heard any thing like it, (returned Lady Diana;) I am ſure it is vaſtly odd."

Our heroine then propoſed to Miſs Elford, and the other ladies, to take a turn in the garden, and join Lady Cecilia and Lady Hillſworth, who were there; but Lady Diana objected, as her hair might ſuffer, and Miſs Corbet alledged the ſame excuſe, and Mrs. Morgan was entirely of their opinion; the two young ladies, therefore, went by themſelves. Miſs Elford, who was charmed with our heroine, expreſſed a great wiſh for increaſing the acquaintance, and Miſs Claremont, not leſs pleaſed with Miſs Elford, invited her to Newton-Hall, where ſhe might have the pleaſure of introducing her to Lady Falkner.

Miſs Elford ſaid, that, juſt at preſent ſhe could not leave home, as ſhe expected her

her uncle, but preſſed Miſs Claremont to make her a viſit. "That I ſhould have real pleaſure in doing ſo, (returned Miſs Claremont,) I beg you will believe; but I am ſo circumſtanced, that I am compelled to refuſe you. Many particulars of my ſituation are too well known for me to ſuppoſe that you can be entirely ignorant of them, and my obligations to my beloved benefactreſs are more than I have the power of expreſſing. The only way I can ſhew my love and gratitude towards her is by my unremitted attention and conſtant endeavours to pleaſe her. I have the happineſs to ſee that my company does ſo, and that my endeavours to entertain her do not fail, I cannot therefore, without pain to myſelf, leave her for any length of time; and the diſtance you live at prevents me from being able to make you a viſit, without being abſent nearly a week; you will therefore, I truſt, not only excuſe me, but prove to me that you are ſatisfied with my reaſons, by favouring me with your company at Newton-Hall, the firſt time you have the power of doing ſo."

Miſs Elford, more pleaſed than ever with Ethelinda, aſſented to all that ſhe had ſaid, and promiſed to wait upon her before it was long. "Though (continued ſhe) I am, like you, a good deal confined, as my uncle, one of the beſt men in the world, (with whom we live when in the country,) has a claim to my particular attention; for, beſides his goodneſs to us, he has been very unfortunate. In the early part of his life, he married againſt the conſent of his friends, and ſoon after went with his wife abroad, for ſome years, where ſhe died; but I apprehend there were ſome particularly painful circumſtances attending the affair, as it is ſtill a ſubject which appears to engroſs his mind, though he always avoids entering upon it; I therefore make a point of diverting his melancholy as much as in my power. Ethelinda applauded a conduct ſo conſiſtent with her own principles.

They now came near the arbour where Lady Cecilia and Lady Hillſworth had ſeated themſelves. Lady Hillſworth was ſatisfying her curioſity about Ethelinda. The ladies

were

were town and fashionable acquaintance.—After much had passed about the last opera, the illness of the Prince, their concern that he could not be persuaded to live a more temperate life, so necessary for his health, and agreeing that it was a great pity, as he was really a charming young man; danced and talked French most elegantly; and, after discussing many other interesting subjects, which they did not really care one farthing about, they talked of the present party, so fortunately productive of their meeting each other.

"But, pray, (cried Lady Hillsworth,) will your la'ship have the goodness to inform me who that Miss Claremont is? She appears to be with you, and is really a fine young woman."

"Yes, indeed, (replied Lady Cecilia,) a very fine young woman! I fancy I need only tell your la'ship that she lives with Lady Falkner, and is what we call her *protégée*."

"Oh! (replied Lady Hillsworth,) I beg your la'ship's pardon; is this the young lady I have heard so much about?"

"Yes, ma'am, this is her, that I dare ſay your ladyſhip has heard of, for the ſtory is rather a ſurpriſing one."

"Why, (returned Lady Hillſworth,) Lady Falkner has been exceſſively good, quite a mother to her I underſtand, and your la'ſhip ſeems to be very kind to her."

"I was very glad, (returned Lady Cecilia,) to oblige Lady Falkner, and pleaſe Miſs Claremont, by bringing her with me; it is the firſt ball, except at ſchool, ſhe was ever at."

"Well, (ſaid Lady Hillſworth,) your intentions are certainly very kind; but, for my part, I think young women ſhould not be introduced too ſoon to parties of this ſort. The men will flock about them, and make ſuch a fuſs, with every thing new, that it is enough to turn their heads."

"Why, I own I am a little of your la'ſhip's opinion, (replied Lady Cecilia;) but Lady Falkner would have been hurt if ſhe had not been of the party, and was pleaſed at her being introduced; and I am ſure I am very happy to oblige them both."

"Does

"Does ſhe dance well?" (ſaid Lady Hillſworth.)

"My ſiſter ſays, charmingly (replied Lady Cecilia;) but I never ſaw her performance myſelf, and think it poſſible that Lady Falkner's partiality may lead her a little beyond what others may think."

"Oh! nothing ſo likely, (anſwered Lady Hillſworth.) But, pray, ma'am, may I aſk if Lady Falkner really knows nothing more about her than common report ſays ſhe does?"

Lady Cecilia was juſt going to anſwer, when the young ladies entered the temple, and they preſently all agreed that it was time to return into the houſe, where the company ſoon after all aſſembled, and the dancing began. Mr. Benfield danced with Lady Hillſworth, Mr. Corbet with Lady Diana, and Lord Hillſworth with Ethelinda, who, though an incomparable dancer, was at firſt rather aſhamed, but ſoon recovered herſelf, and felt that pleaſure ſo natural to a young perſon in ſuch a ſituation.

She did not like her partner; he fatigued her with compliments, was a married man, and ſhe (very ignorant of the fine world) concluded he could mean nothing but civility; yet it diſtreſſed her, and ſhe perceived a degree of haughtineſs in Lady Hillſworth that ſhe had not obſerved before, and could not account for; nor, indeed, did ſhe give herſelf a great deal of trouble to do ſo, but was contented with attributing it to an uncertainty of temper, which might lead her to treat a perſon one hour with civility, and the next, without any cauſe for it, with haughty diſtance. She had never met with ſuch diſpoſitions, but ſhe had heard of them very often, and concluded Lady Hillſworth to be of that number. She had no idea of jealouſy producing that behaviour; and herſelf being the object of it was the laſt idea that would have entered her mind.

Mr. Corbet aſked Ethelinda's hand for the two next dances, and was rather chagrined when ſhe told him ſhe was engaged. He then aſked her for the two after the next, and

and was accepted. Ethelinda's dancing was ſo ſuperior, that it attracted every one's notice; and all the gentlemen were ſo ſolicitous to gain her hand, that, by the time the two or three firſt dances were over, ſhe was engaged for the whole evening.

Capt. Aſhley, who was Miſs Corbet's partner, was impatient for the concluſion of the two firſt dances, and, the moment they ended, flew to claim Ethelinda's promiſe. Indeed, except juſt during the time of dancing, he had not been far from her, and was every minute more and more captivated. He reſolved to avail himſelf of Mr. Corbet's acquaintance, and, by making a viſit to Newton-Hall, again to get admitted into the company of the moſt charming woman he had ever ſeen.

He beheld his brother's admiration of her, but did not believe he dared to have a diſhonourable thought of a woman in her ſituation; and, though Mr. Corbet, like every other man, ſeemed attentive to her,

he did not ſeem particularly ſo; therefore the field appeared open to him, and, for the firſt time in his life, he began to wiſh for a larger fortune, though his own was by no means a contemptible one. What he had at preſent was fifteen thouſand pounds, paternal inheritance; eight or nine thouſand more, which he had made in prize-money, and he had a rich aunt, who declared that ſhe ſhould make him her heir.

Capt. Aſhley was an honour to his profeſſion. He proved that a ſailor can be a truly fine gentleman. He owed a great deal to nature, and a great deal more to education; for, though, as a ſeaman he had acquired the honeſty and liberality more frequently found in that profeſſion than in any other, yet he had been enough on ſhore, and in the beſt company, to be perfectly well bred; and had the good ſenſe, by frequently withdrawing from the allurements and temptations of the world, to improve his mind by ſtudy and reflection Such was Capt. Aſhley, and with a heart generous, open, ſincere,

cere, and affectionate, he could not long feel indifferent to the excellencies of our heroine, whoſe ſentiments appeared to him ſo congenial to his own.

Mr. Corbet ſaw with vexation the conqueſt that Miſs Claremont had made, and was not much pleaſed when Sir James invited the whole family to call at Newton-Hall, in their way to London, where Lord Hillſworth was going upon buſineſs. Her ladyſhip too would gladly have been excuſed the viſit, but could not make any reaſonable objection to it Capt. Aſhley heard the invitation with delight. It gave him additional ſpirits, and the evening paſſed away very pleaſantly.

Ethelinda experienced ſenſations to which ſhe had been before a ſtranger. The whole entertainment was new to her. She ſaw herſelf the object of attention: ſhe had reaſon to think it was approbation; and we do not pretend to believe that ſhe was ſo far diveſted of human vanity, as not to feel any

any gratification from it. After the country-dances, minuets were begun. Lady Diana was taken out, and performed very well, as did Miſs Corbet. Ethelinda felt in a tremor; it was an exhibition that alarmed her, and ſhe tremblingly aſſented to make it;—but the grace and elegance with which ſhe performed brought her a profuſion of compliments from the men, and *ungracious* applauſe, with frowning ſmiles, from the women.

The time of ſupper paſſed agreeably, and, as many of the party had a conſiderable diſtance to return home, it had been previouſly determined not to dance afterwards.

Nothing has yet been ſaid of Mr. Benfield, who, from being obliged to attend to performing the honours of his houſe, had far leſs of our heroine's company and converſation than he wiſhed for. He was, however, ſo much captivated, that he reſolved to wait upon Lady Falkner immediately, with an open declaration of his ſentiments.

timents. In conſequence of them, he, in the courſe of the evening, took opportunities of ſaying enough to Ethelinda to inform her of his wiſhes, and ſhe underſtood him perfectly, but was not to be gained with ſuch indelicate expedition, had he even been formed to pleaſe her: ſhe therefore avoided the appearing to underſtand declarations that could have but one meaning.

Capt. Aſhley aroſe the next morning, little the better for his night's reſt; indeed it might with more propriety have been termed a night of diſturbance, for his mind was agitated in a way he had never before experienced, and he felt himſelf a prey to a variety of ſenſations; but, when he queſtioned himſelf, he could ſcarcely think it poſſible to be ſeriouſly in love with a woman that he had never ſeen four and twenty hours before;—yet ſhe had taken the entire poſſeſſion of his mind, and the chief bent of his thoughts were, how and when he ſhould ſee her after that morning, on which the whole party were to ſeparate. He had obſerved

Mr.

Mr. Benfield's attentions the latter part of the evening, but they did not alarm him. He had not obſerved that Miſs Claremont ſeemed pleaſed with them, or in the ſmalleſt degree to return them.

When the party were aſſembled to breakfaſt, and the uſual compliments over, Sir James repeated his invitation to the Hillſworth family, and they promiſed to ſpend the following Monday at Newton-Hall.

Capt. Aſhley felt a real uneaſineſs at parting with Miſs Claremont, though he could hardly bring himſelf to believe the poſſibility of his being ſo ſtrongly captivated in ſo ſhort a time. When the carriage drove from the door, which conveyed the lovely girl away, he exclaimed, "I verily believe if there be perfection in the world, it is in that carriage!"

"Oh! you mean Miſs Corbet, brother (cried Lady Diana.) Yes, ſhe is a charming girl; but I thought, brother, you were too wiſe to form haſty opinions."

"Though

"Though I do not hold myſelf particularly wiſe, ſiſter, (replied Capt. Aſhley, with a ſmile,) yet I will grant, that I do not in general truſt to outward appearances; but there is ſomething in Miſs Claremont, without meaning to depreciate from Miſs Corbet, that appears ſo peculiarly amiable, that I am tempted to give up my general maxim."

"Lord! brother, I think you ſeem ſeriouſly in love with her."

"If I were ſo, ſiſter, I ſhould not be aſhamed to own it."

"Why, you certainly do not know who ſhe is, brother; and I am ſure you would not marry any body you know nothing about."

"You are perfectly right, ſiſter, (returned Capt. Aſhley;) I certainly would not marry any one whom I knew nothing about."

Lady Diana was going to reply, when Mr. Benfield and the other gentlemen, who had walked to ſome diſtance, returned, and joined them. The Hillſworths ſoon after took

took their leave, as did the reſt of the party. Mr. and Miſs Elford talked much of our heroine, during their drive home. Miſs Elford, who, in herſelf was handſome and amiable, declared that ſhe had never been before ſo much ſtruck with any perſon, or liked any one ſo well, upon ſo ſhort an acquaintance, and determined that ſhe would go the very firſt opportunity to pay her a viſit; and, notwithſtanding the excellent reaſons Ethelinda gave for not returning it, did not deſpair of prevailing with Lady Falkner to part with her for a few days, when ſhe had other company.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Where fashionable Opinions, selfish Feelings, and vicious Principles, display themselves.

LADY Falkner had expected the return of her guests with some degree of impatience. She was eager to learn how Ethelinda had performed, how been approved of, how entertained, &c. The moment the coach-door was opened, Ethelinda flew to find Lady Falkner, who met her at the top of the stairs.

"Well, my dear child, (cried her ladyship,) how do you do?"

"Excessively well! (replied Ethelinda, embracing her with eagerness;) I have been quite

quite delighted: it was a charming party, and every body ſeemed pleaſed."

Lady Cecilia by this time came up, and a general deſcription of the entertainment enſued.

Lady Falkner loved Ethelinda with the greateſt tenderneſs, and ſhe was very inquiſitive to know with whom ſhe danced, &c. &c. Sir James ſpoke his undiſguiſed ſentiments, uninfluenced by any private paſſions or views, and it was from him ſhe learned how much Miſs Claremont had been the object of admiration, how charmingly ſhe looked, and with what grace ſhe danced; and he told her ladyſhip that he believed Miſs Claremont had made more than one conqueſt, for, if he could judge, Capt. Aſhley and Mr. Benfield were thorough rivals. However, he had given the former a chance, for he had taken the liberty to invite all the Hillſworth family to dine at Newton-Hall, the following Monday, in their way to town. Lady Falkner ſaid ſhe ſhould

ſhould be happy to ſee any of his friends. She then aſked what ſort of a man Capt. Aſhley was. Sir James replied, "A very worthy fellow, that emulates the gallant admiral who trained him. He had fought under him, and now feelingly lamented that ſo brave a veteran, who had ſerved his country ſo long and ſo nobly,—who had in its ſervice braved ſhipwrecks, ſtorms, and battles, ſhould afterwards have to defend his honour and his life againſt the baſe attacks of party malice, though it is certain that his enemies ſet him in a blaze of light, inſtead of the obſcurity they hoped for."

"In a blaze of light, indeed! (cried Miſs Corbet,) for I am ſure I thought there would have been no leſs a conflagration than that of all London being burnt, in compliment to him."

"Well, (ſaid Lady Falkner,) though far from defending riotous mobs; I know not how to diſapprove of the marks of general approbation in ſuch a cauſe as that; and cannot but rejoice to ſee that the feelings, even

even of the loweſt ranks, are rouſed by the triumph of virtue."

"But, aunt, you muſt allow (ſaid Miſs Corbet) that thoſe lawleſs doings are often productive of a great deal of miſchief; and it is generally a mere mob that compels people to ſuch teſtimonies of applauſe."

"I grant, my dear, that it often is ſo. In this caſe, however, it was not: few people among the number acted againſt their inclinations; but I do not know whether I would not rather ſee and ſuffer a little miſchief, even when I diſapproved the cauſe, than have the common people ſo dead to the honeſt feelings of Engliſhmen, as to ſink into a ſtate of indifference in matters of public concern. Such a ſort of apathy, in a free country, is not, in my opinion, to be wiſhed for."

Sir James agreed in opinion with her ladyſhip, but Mr. Corbet, who thought it intolerable that the common people ſhould be ſuffered to aſſemble in multitudes on any occaſion whatever, exclaimed againſt the

the police, and approved of the quiet of military governments.

Miſs Corbet declared that ſhe ſhould like any ſort of government that prevented the common people from being troubleſome, and kept them more in ſubjection to their betters, and ſhe ſhould then be able to go to the Opera and Ancient Muſic with greater ſafety.

Ethelinda had not been in the room during this converſation. When ſhe returned, Miſs Corbet propoſed ſhewing the new dreſs ſhe had worn at the ball to Lady Falkner, and they all went into the dreſſing-room to look at it, and afterwards ſeparated to prepare for dinner.

Lady Cecilia, though very haughty in general, would ſometimes talk to her maid, and ſhe happened juſt then to be ſo diſpoſed. Miſs Corbet's dreſs was the ſubject. Lady Cecilia aſking Mrs. Dixon how ſhe liked it, Mrs. Dixon ſaid that ſhe thought

it beautiful, and much more elegant than Miſs Claremont's, which was quite plain and unbecoming: "but, when people, (continued ſhe,) are ſet up for ſuch beauties, they think they may wear any thing; though, for my part, I can't ſee no ſuch violent beauty in her neither; but, as Mrs. Gregſon ſays, ſome people in the world have fine luck."

"Why, (demanded Lady Cecilia,) is not Miſs Claremont a great favourite with Mrs. Gregſon, and all the family?"

"Why, my lady, as for that, Mrs. Gregſon ſays that ſhe has no notion but of every body's having their right, and ſhe thinks Lady Falkner, begging your ladyſhip's pardon, makes too much of Miſs Claremont, and ſets her up too high, conſidering that ſhe does not know who ſhe is; and ſhe ſays, if ſhe were your ladyſhip, ſhe ſhould not be ſo fond of her as you are."

Lady Cecilia plainly ſaw by this converſation that Ethelinda was no favourite with Mrs. Gregſon; but was puzzled to

account for the cauſe, and was reſolved to get it out of her talkative maid. "Pray, (continued her ladyſhip,) are Mrs. Manſel (Lady Falkner's own maid) and Mrs. Gregſon great friends?"

"Why, no, my lady; I don't believe they love one another extraordinary well.—Mrs. Gregſon ſays to me in confidence, that Mrs. Manſel is ſuch a violent favourite with her lady, that nobody elſe is nothing, and ſhe don't ſee no reaſon for that; but Miſs Claremont is ſo fond of Mrs. Manſel, that ſhe will often have her to ſit and walk with her. To be ſure, as ſhe was a clergyman's daughter, ſhe had more education and larning, but ſhe mayn't be the better for that, though ſhe gives herſelf the airs of not liking to ſit in the ſtill room any more than ſhe can help."

It was now perfectly explained to Lady Cecilia, why Mrs. Gregſon did not like Miſs Claremont, and a ſcheme, which ſhe had been meditating upon, immediately recurred to her, in which ſhe thought Mrs.

Gregſon might aſſiſt; and ſhe determined to loſe no time in attaching her to her intereſt.

She took the firſt opportunity of making a pretence of wanting Mrs. Gregſon; and, having a cold, ſent for her, to give directions about ſome medicine ſhe meant to have made for it. Mrs. Gregſon received the orders with profound reſpect, and was courteſying away, when Lady Cecilia ſaid, in a very gracious manner, "Indeed, Lady Falkner is lucky to have ſo clever a perſon to manage her family as you Mrs. Gregſon."

"Your ladyſhip is extremely good, (replied Mrs. Gregſon, courteſying ſtill lower.) I always tries to give ſatisfaction, but your ladyſhip knows the more one does, the more one may, ſometimes."

"But I hope that is not your caſe, Mrs. Gregſon," replied Lady Cecilia.

"Why, indeed, my lady, I am ſorry to ſay there are people who like ſome people better than others, that deſerve as well."

"It is very true, Mrs. Gregſon; the moſt worthy are not always the moſt reſpected."

"No, indeed, my lady! or elſe——but I beg your ladyſhip's pardon for running on ſo."—

"Oh! pray go on, Mrs. Gregſon."

"O dear, my lady!—Why, only as your ladyſhip ſays, that, if the moſt worthy always had their right, we ſhould ſee things different from what things are. I know who would not be ſo great a favourite with ſome folks as ſomebody elſe, and, beſides that, people, that one don't know who and what they are, wouldn't take other people's right away."

"I believe I underſtand you, Mrs. Gregſon, (replied Lady Cecilia;) but my ſiſter is very good in taking care of Miſs Claremont, who has nobody elſe to be good to her you know."

"Very true, (replied Mrs. Gregſon;) as your ladyſhip ſays, it is very good to be kind to thoſe who have nobody belonging to them; but I think there is a difference

between doing what is real charity ; ſuch as giving victuals, and clothing, and ſo on, and making fine ladies of people that might be born to work honeſtly for their bread, and ſetting her upon a level with Miſs Corbet, who is, as one may ſay, edged all round with quality. It hurts me like any thing, to ſee and know — but I have done ; I hope I have not offended your ladyſhip."

" Oh ! quite otherwiſe, my good Mrs. Gregſon, (replied Lady Cecilia ;) I am much obliged to you for letting me hear what you know. I am ſure it is from very good and juſt motives, ſo pray go on."

" Yes, indeed, I am ſure your ladyſhip knows I have no notion but to do good."

" But what (cried Lady Cecilia) were you ſaying, that you *know* Mrs. Gregſon ?"

" Why, my lady, I was only thinking that ſome people's right would go to other ſome."

" What makes you think ſo, Mrs. Gregſon ?"

" Why, I have more reaſons than one for ſaying ſo ; but if I ſhould tell your ladyſhip,

ſhip, and then ſuffer for it, that would be very hard upon me, who am but a poor ſervant your ladyſhip knows."

"O my good Mrs. Gregſon! pray tell me all you know; do not have any apprehenſions. You may be ſure that I will be your friend, and you ſhall never ſuffer for telling me what indeed in juſtice you ought to do."

Lady Cecilia then pulled out her purſe, and, to convince this conſcientious houſekeeper how much ſhe was in the right, preſented her with a guinea as a reward for her honeſty.

Mrs. Gregſon, quite convinced by this proof of the rectitude of her deſigns, told Lady Cecilia "that ſome time ago, ſhe was going by her lady's dreſſing-room door, and, hearing ſome earneſt talking, naturally liſtened to hear if any thing was the matter, and found it was Mr. Grey, her ladyſhip's lawyer, and that ſhe was giving him directions about her will, and ſhe could not hear

diſtinctly, but ſhe heard the name of Miſs Claremont very often; and ſhe heard her lady ſay, "every thing elſe except thoſe legacies;" and then ſhe heard her ſay, "I love her as my child;" and from all I heard (continued Mrs. Gregſon,) though I don't remember exactneſſes, I have no doubt ſhe has left her every thing; and I heard the name of Mrs. Manſel, and I don't doubt ſhe is well off, but ſome folks have better luck than others."

Lady Cecilia thanked Mrs. Gregſon for her intelligence, but charged her to keep it a profound ſecret from any one, and never mention a word of it to any creature living. Mrs. Gregſon made no ſcruple of promiſing, but omitted to inform Lady Cecilia that ſhe had already mentioned it to a few of her particular friends.

Lady Cecilia then deſired that ſhe would inform her of any thing elſe that came under her knowledge upon that ſubject, which

which the truſty houſekeeper reſolved for many reaſons to do.

Mr. Corbet, who was thoroughly, though ſecretly enamoured with Ethelinda, paid her a great deal of attention. Before his family, and particularly his mother, it was confined to politeneſs; but, when alone with her, his ſtile and manner became much more tender. He declared that it was only her powers that could keep him in that dull place, and he accuſed her of a cruel reſerve. In fact, he was become the object of her averſion. She ſaw his artifices, and ſhe had been informed by Mrs. Manſel of ſome actions which had come to her knowledge, and were by no means to his credit.

Mrs. Manſel was not of the tittle-tattle tribe; and, though there is certainly ſomething in the character of a lady's woman that generally gives a propenſity to talking, yet ſhe kept to herſelf many more anecdotes than ſhe imparted to her lady. She would

undoubtedly be greatly blamed by all the ſiſterhood for this reſerve, as they in general do not hold taciturnity to be the beſt method of inſinuating themſelves into their ladies' good graces; but Mrs. Manſel foolſhly reſolved to truſt to her merits, and ſhe would not, unrequeſted, tell her lady circumſtances that would only vex her, without a hope of ſome good effect ariſing from the information.

She loved Miſs Claremont too well not feel intereſted in her knowing the real character of Mr. Corbet, and therefore to her ſhe had no reſerves upon that ſubject, and had informed her of ſeveral unprincipled actions of his; and the morning before the Hillſworth family were expected, as ſhe was aſſiſting Miſs Claremont to dreſs, ſhe ſaid ſhe could now inform her of the particulars of Mr. Corbet's behaviour to poor Nancy.

"That it has been bad enough, I have no doubt, (replied Ethelinda;) but I hope the

the poor unfortunate creature is not left to want."

"That, madam, with other particulars, I will now, if you pleaſe, inform you of. When Mr. Corbet was laſt here, immediately after he came from abroad, he called at Mr. Benwell's. The farmer and his wife were out, and, unfortunately, Nancy at home. He was ſtruck with her innocence and beauty, for ſhe certainly is, or rather was, a very pretty girl. He ſaid a thouſand fine things to her, but nothing offenſive. It is not very ſurpriſing that ſo innocent and inexperienced a creature ſhould be the dupe of his art. He contrived to ſee her ſeveral times, without giving her the leaſt alarm; but, by degrees, he ventured to make ſuch propoſals as at firſt ſhocked her greatly: he then pretended violent illneſs on her account, and the utmoſt grief at not being able to marry her at preſent, on account of his aunt, with inſinuations that he would do ſo in future; in ſhort, at laſt he prevailed, and ſhe became the victim of his artifice. But, as one bad action will

not at firſt entirely pollute an innocent mind, or ſmother the upbraidings of conſcience, ſhe ſoon felt its keen reproaches, and is now a prey to miſery and deſpair. Her health ſeems declining very faſt, and, with a heart ready to break, ſhe has owned the affair to her poor mother, who indeed too well gueſſed the cauſe of her miſery. But I greatly fear her attachment to this worthleſs libertine is ſo ſtrong, and her deſpair at his neglect ſo great, that ſhe will not long ſurvive the loſs of her innocence. It ſeems he had no doubts of quieting her ſcruples very ſoon, and thought money would ſet every thing right with the old people, who, poor creatures, have lately been very unfortunate to be ſure; but yeſterday, with the tears running down his venerable face, poor Arthur told me that he now found the want of money, and the loſs of property, were not the worſt of afflictions.

"I endeavoured to comfort him, when he exclaimed, "O my poor loſt child!" and left the room. I then heard very diſtinctly the

the ſobbing of a perſon in an adjoining chamber, I ventured to open the door, and ſaw the unhappy mother on her knees, by the ſide of her wretched daughter, who was laid on the bed, pale, and ſo languid, as to diſcover every ſymptom of weakneſs and decline.

"O my child! (continued the ſuffering parent,) may that Power, who alone can do ſo, eaſe thy afflicted mind, and reſtore thee to peace, and oh! if I may dare to implore ſo much, to life, and to us, thy poor wretched parents;—and yet, my child, we have not wherewithal to ſupport thee. Oh! we want a bit of bread.—I will, I will tell Lady Falkner; ſhe ſhall know to what poverty we are reduced, and the conſequence of it."

"Mother, beloved mother! (exclaimed in a weak voice the poor Nancy,) if you love me, go not to Lady Falkner. Wicked and deceitful as her nephew is, oh! do not deny my requeſt; do not let me be the talk of every body."

"Her poor mother, who, you know, ma'am, was better educated than ſuch people generally are, tried to give her that comfort which ſhe herſelf wanted. At laſt, burſting into tears, ſhe exclaimed, "But what muſt we do, my child? We have not enough to ſupport the remains of life, which, if deprived of you, will indeed be a burden to us."

"O my good dear mother! (cried Nancy,) can you yet love your poor ſeduced child?"

"I could bear it no longer, and my agitation rouſed Mrs. Benwell. She turned round, and, ſeeing me, ſtood motionleſs. I beckened to her with my hand, and made ſigns not to diſturb Nancy. She underſtood me, and ſaid, "Compoſe yourſelf, Nancy, and I will go, and get you ſomething to drink, and return preſently." She came to me, but was unable to utter a word. I entreated her to tell me if I could be of any ſervice to her.

"Oh! (ſhe exclaimed, burſting into an agony of tears,) it is beyond the power of any

any mortal to be of ſervice to me. That vile Mr. Corbet, taking advantage of our ſituation, offered to lend Mr. Benwell money, to be repaid in the ruin of our child. He knows I was born to better hopes; but, ruined and undone as ſhe is, if our child was but ſpared to us, we could beg our bread, and yet taſte of comfort. Oh! ſhe was my dear-loved Nancy! — was a dutiful and good child, till ſhe was led away by that vile libertine; and we have ſtill the comfort of believing her heart uncorrupted. Yes, yes, it is!" ſobbed the wretched mother, and, ſinking againſt her chair, I thought ſhe would have fainted. It was ſometime before ſhe recovered, but ſhe then became more calm. I enquired into the ſtate of their affairs, and find they owe this wretch thirty pounds."

"And is this all? (exclaimed Ethelinda.) Oh! I wiſh I could as ſoon relieve their other more deeply-rooted misfortunes; but I will go the moment I am dreſſed, and try to give comfort to this poor girl. If I ſee

that her grief ariſes from remorſe, and not from a continued attachment to that baſe man, I ſhall have hopes; but, if, in ſpite of his baſeneſs, ſhe ſtill loves him, nothing effectual can be done. Were it any other man, Lady Falkner ſhould immediately hear of it, but I cannot wound her heart by letting her know that Mr. Corbet is ſuch a villain. I muſt therefore do my beſt, with your aſſiſtance, my good Mrs. Manſel, though I am very inexperienced in ſuch affairs; indeed, I hope there are not many inſtances of ſuch cruel baſeneſs."

"O my dear young lady! (replied Mrs. Manſel,) you have ſeen very little indeed of the world. When you have ſeen more, you will know that the young men of the preſent diſſipated unreflecting age, think nothing of ſeduction. So as they can gratify a preſent paſſion, they care not what ſacrifices they make in conſequence of it:—their own faith and truth are the firſt victims; the peace of the unfortunate object of their attachment the next; — perhaps the wretchedneſs and ruin of a whole family may

may enſue; and they never ſtop in their career to reflect that the ultimate victim will be themſelves."

"I hope, my dear Mrs. Manſel, (replied Ethelinda,) that it will never be my lot to live among ſuch vile people. I think it is a great pity that one muſt be civil to them: they ought to meet with general contempt. I have the greateſt difficulty in behaving with civility to Mr. Corbet, but I take great pains to do ſo, as I know it would not become me to do otherwiſe, though I have often a ſtrong inclination to impart my ſentiments to him, with a freedom that would, I believe, mortify him."

"My dear young lady, (returned Mrs. Manſel,) you would certainly, if you allow me to give my opinion, do wrong in behaving with any incivility to him. It could anſwer no one good purpoſe, and might produce many unpleaſant conſequences. — All I wiſhed for is effected. You now ſee him in his true colours, and will be ſafe from falling a victim yourſelf, by aſſenting to

to any endeavours that may be formed to unite you to ſo unworthy an object. It is with great concern I ſee my lady's intention. Should ſhe perſevere in it, you muſt not be ſacrificed. She muſt, if nothing elſe will do, be informed of his true character, however ſhe may be ſhocked at the information."

"Of all the people in the world, (replied Miſs Claremont,) I am the laſt to inform her of it. Circumſtanced as I am, a child of her bounty, what cruel inferences might not be drawn, and what unjuſt motives alledged for my conduct; beſides which, I could not eaſily bring myſelf to wound her ſo deeply. However, that is a future conſideration. I will now haſten to poor Nancy;" — and with that eagerneſs which generally accompanies a good and a young mind, in the hope of being able to aſſiſt the diſtreſſed, Ethelinda now made the beſt of her way to the farmer's houſe. She went in without ceremony, and, finding no one in the firſt room, ſhe concluded poor Nancy was

was not well enough to quit her bed, and ſo haſtily advanced to her room: She opened the door very gently, but was ſurpriſed to ſee her up, and ſetting upon the ſide of the bed, reading a letter, which, on ſeeing Miſs Claremont, ſhe haſtily put into her boſom, and in great confuſion roſe up, and ſat down again. "I am very glad to ſee you ſo well, Nancy, (ſaid Miſs Claremont;) you are much better than by Mrs. Manſel's account I expected to find you."

"I am greatly obliged to you, (replied Nancy, colouring and heſitating,) yes, I am much better.—I hope very ſoon to be quite well."

A reception ſo different from what Ethelinda expected, quite confounded her. She knew not what to make of it: a hundred ideas preſented themſelves; and, leſt the reader ſhould be as much perplexed as ſhe was, we may as well account for this ſudden and ſurpriſing amendment in Nancy, which we ſhall do in the next chapter.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

In which Appearances deceive, and ſeeming Contradictions are reconciled.

THE fact was, that Nancy doated on her ſeducer, and his late indifference towards her had in reality occaſioned her more diſquiet than the reproaches of her mind, which, though naturally good, he had greatly perverted, and upon his neglect, ſhe miſtook the agitation ſhe then felt for repentance.

Mr. Corbet, who began to apprehend the getting into ſome ſerious ſcrape about this girl, if he continued his frequent viſits, at or near the farm, endeavoured to perſuade her

r to go to ſervice in town. She had for me time paſt perceived an indifference in m towards her that ſhocked her greatly ; d, upon her refuſing to leave her father d mother, he told her that he muſt, ough very unwillingly, abſent himſelf from e farm, or he ſhould create ſuſpicions that uld be very prejudicial both to her and nſelf.

At firſt ſhe was deceived by this idea, but n begun to think that his abſence pro-ded from choice, which apprehenſion was nfirmed by having heard from ſome ſer-t that it was expected Mr. Corbet and ſs Claremont would ſoon be united. is news threw her into ſuch a fit of de-r, that ſhe could not conceal the cauſe t from her mother, and ſoon after fol-ed the ſcene we have before deſcribed.

Mr. Corbet, thinking himſelf very ſecure Nancy's not divulging the ſecret, would e kept it inviolably on his part, leſt it uld, by any untoward accident, be brought

brought to the ears of his aunt; for, thoug
it was not his policy to boaſt ſo much
ſuch affairs as many do, yet he was not
very ſtrict as to have ſcrupled amuſing
few intimate friends with ſo common a
laughable an anecdote. But he found fro
Duval, his valet de chambre, that M
Manſel had been at the farm, had fou
poor Nancy dying of a broken heart, a
the father and mother gone, or going mad

This account Duval had from one of t
maids, who had overheard part of the co
verſation between Mrs. Manſel and M
Claremont. She likewiſe told it to t
houſekeeper, whoſe morals, though v
virtuous in general, were juſt now, for r
ſons that have been hinted at, rather
commodating to the Corbet family, and
did not wiſh to have any thing occur p
judicial to them, but declared that ſhe ha
to make miſchief, and therefore told
girl, as ſhe valued her place, not to mak
talk of what ſhe had heard, for it was
buſineſs of her's, if it was ever ſo ſhock
a caſtr

caſtrofy. This information of Duval's was
t very pleaſant to Mr. Corbet. He was
rplexed how to act. To have the whole
fair come out without any ſoftening would
ſtroy him with Lady Falkner, and fruſtrate
his deſigns upon Ethelinda. He had but
e way to ſave appearances :—to perſuade
ancy, whoſe ſituation too required ab-
nce from home, of his firm attachment to
r; but that he could not, as things were
rcumſtanced, ever again ſee her there.
n that account he begged her to aſſume
cheerful appearance, pretend to her father
d mother, that, after what had happened,
e could not live happy there, and wiſhed
the preſent to go to ſervice in London.
ter ſhe got there, he would provide a
ce for her to be in, and inſinuated that a
e might ſoon come when he ſhould be
le to make her amends for complying
h his preſent propoſals, which ſhe muſt
were for their mutual intereſt.

He diſpatched a letter by the truſty
val, who made no ſcruple of watching
an

an opportunity of getting to Nancy's room and then, with a moſt reſpectful apology ventured to enquire after her health. She had not heard him come in, was really very low and weak, and ſtarted at ſeeing him.

He preſented the letter, ſaying, at the ſame time, that his poor maſter was much worſe than ſhe was. "Worſe than I am (exclaimed ſhe,) oh! that cannot be!"

The faithful Duval made no ſcruple of atteſting his aſſertion with a few ſolemn oaths, aſſuring her, at the ſame time, that it was only in *her* power to relieve his dear maſter, who was at preſent ſo bad, and all becauſe of her.

Though it may ſeem very odd, (lovers may perhaps reconcile the paradox,) this account certainly made Nancy a great deal better; and, after having promiſed to ſend an anſwer to the letter the following day, and appointed him to come for it, ſhe dis patched him back to his maſter, not very

ll ſatisfied with the ſucceſs of his embaſſy. n reading the letter, ſhe found the key that pened to her the real ſource of her grief. She burſt into tears, but a ſoftneſs accom- anied them, and ſhe whiſpered to herſelf, I am not forſaken then! — he ſtill loves ne! Oh! why did I doubt him?" — and hen, to make him amends for having done im ſo much injuſtice, determined to adopt ll his plans, and implicitly follow his di- ections. She had not revealed the conſe- uences of her ſeduction to her mother: ame had kept the ſecret. She rejoiced at , and now reſolved to appear reſigned and mpoſed, and in a little time to put the an ſhe had juſt received into practice.

Thus did a heart, which a few months fore was uncorrupted and pure, now be- me a party in the deſigns of diſſimulation, , and wickedneſs. Oh! that a paſſion, planted in our natures for the beſt of pur- ſes, ſhould be rendered ſubſervient to the rſt. Unhappy woman! how much art ou to be pitied! too often betrayed by a tenderneſs

tenderneſs that ſhould be one of thy greateſt ornaments, and by that object, who is bound (if moral ties could bind) to be thy protector.

The human mind and body are ſo cloſely connected together, that, in general, what influences one, will greatly affect the other; particularly when bodily diſorders ariſe from uneaſineſs of mind, remove the cauſe, and the effect ſoon ceaſes. This was the caſe with poor Nancy. She had been alarmingly ill the night before; but the letter, given her by Duval, had operated as a greater reſtorative than any other ſhe could have received.

The poor creature, lately ſo artleſs, open now to the impulſes of her paſſion, and perſuading herſelf to believe all ſhe wiſhed, ſaw not the lurking miſchief; and, when ſhe placed the envenomed letter in her boſom, felt not the ſting and poiſon it contained. The joy of believing herſelf beloved, and that the man her heart doated upo

upon was ſtill conſtant, had given her delightful ſenſations, which operated inſtantaneouſly upon her whole frame, and ſhe ſoon found herſelf wonderfully recovered.—She had been taking this cordial for the fifth time, and bedewing it with her tears, when Ethelinda entered. Her appearance gave riſe to a variety of ſenſations. She had been the object of her jealouſy, yet ſhe was the object of her fear and of her reſpect. She was apprehenſive that it was the knowledge of her ſtory which had brought Ethelinda to her, and ſhe now heartily wiſhed it had never been divulged; and was greatly at a loſs how to conduct herſelf upon ſo trying an occaſion. In what manner ſhe did ſo will be ſeen in the next chapter.

CHAP. VII.

In which very contrary Conduct and oppoſite Paſſions appear, though all originating from the ſame Cauſe, and having the ſame End in View.

THAT love is the greateſt tyrant which enſlaves mankind is, I believe, a fact that has been allowed in almoſt every age preceding the wiſe one in which we have the happineſs to live, and will not, I ſuppoſe be denied even by the greateſt caſuiſts of the preſent time, though they deny things that have hitherto ſeemed clear; and are often ſo good as to raiſe an abundance of ſcruples without ſatisfying any, and thereby give us the pleaſure of doubting the exiſtence of almoſt every thing we hear and ſee

and of courſe ſo perplex our imaginations, that we have the comfort of hardly knowing whether we do ſee or hear at all; and, if we do, whether it is to any purpoſe. That this is a conſequence of great and ſuperior genius is, I dare ſay, perfectly true, and poſſibly theſe well-informed gentlemen may doubt if there exiſts ſuch a ſentiment as love.

It is probable they never experienced its influence,—never felt the pleaſures, pains, and tumults, it creates, and therefore may be well juſtified in believing that it does not exiſt; but, as the major part of the world at *preſent* do believe in the exiſtence of ſuch an infatuation, till theſe rejecting caſuiſts have aſſerted the contrary, we will venture to ſuppoſe there is a kind of ſpark, lodged in moſt people's breaſt, which, when lighted up, is capable of influencing it beyond any other power. It works wonders, conquers more difficulties, and encounters more dangers than Don Quixote ever did. This wonder-working power has an equal

ſway over wiſdom and folly, and ſeems implanted in us to bring about a variety of events. It is the greateſt of all levellers,—make poor rich, and rich poor,—the proud humble, and the humble great. By ſome it is adored as the author of their happineſs, by others branded as the cauſe of their wretchedneſs; and ſo paradoxical is this ſame ſentiment, that it is at one time the bane, and at another the bleſſing of the ſame perſon.

Poor Nancy was not prepared for this viſit, and was doubtful what it foreboded. Miſs Claremont continued to expreſs her ſurpriſe at finding her ſo well, but had ſo much delicacy, and felt ſo much for her ſituation, that ſhe could not bring herſelf to ſay any thing pointed upon the ſubject.

"Can I (continued ſhe) be of any ſervice to you? If I can, command me to the utmoſt of my power."

She looked pretty ſtedfaſtly at Nancy as ſhe ſpoke, who, bluſhing, aſſured her that ſhe

ſhe was much better; that, indeed, her illneſs had not been ſo great as it had appeared; that ſhe was much obliged to her, but did not want any thing.

Ethelinda ſaw that Nancy was in confuſion, and was ſo puzzled at her behaviour, that ſhe knew not what to ſay, and therefore, but with a look of pity, told her, that ſhe was glad to find her better, and wiſhed her a good morning.

Ethelinda returned ſlowly home, reflecting upon what had juſt paſſed; but, as the morning was particularly hot, inſtead of going the neareſt way, by the road, ſhe went through a ſmall wood, which led into the park. She had not gone far, before ſhe ſaw Mr. Corbet at a diſtance. Her diſdain aroſe at ſight of him, and ſhe would have avoided him, if poſſible. He came up to her with more than uſual freedom in his manners; and, taking her by the hand, enquired what had induced her to walk ſo far from home at ſo early an hour?

She told him, withdrawing her hand, that ſhe had been to ſee a perſon who had been ill.

"That perſon (ſaid he) is greatly to be envied, whoever it is, that you are ſo much intereſted about."

"Not very greatly to be envied, I believe," cried Ethelinda.

"Yes, lovely creature! (ſaid Mr. Corbet, ſeizing her hand again with ſome violence,) every one is to be envied who attracts your notice;" at the ſame time imprinting a violent kiſs upon her hand.

Ethelinda, at once aſtoniſhed, and enraged at his manner, told him "that ſhe did not underſtand what he meant by ſuch behaviour, and inſiſted upon his leaving her that inſtant."

"In any thing elſe, (replied Mr. Corbet,) I am ready to obey you; but you cannot be ignorant of the violence of my paſſion for you, cruel and inſenſible as you are to it!"

"This

"This is not the way (returned Ethelinda, with ſpirit,) to make me think more favourably of it, were I to believe what you ſay."

He then begun moſt ſolemnly to atteſt the truth of his aſſertions, which provoked Ethelinda to tell him that ſhe was ſhocked to find ſo much duplicity and wickedneſs in any one, and wondered he durſt talk in that manner to her, knowing how little right he had to do ſo.

He ſaid, "if being equal to her in merit was neceſſary for the man who preſumed to love her, he feared that ſhe would never find one under that deſcription; but, in other reſpects, he conceived his attentions were not an affront to any woman."

Finding that he miſunderſtood her meaning, "Though it is not (ſaid ſhe) of much conſequence whether you do, or do not underſtand me, with regard to my ſentiments, I will explain what I mean, that I may not

incur a cenſure, which indeed it is hardly poſſible any ſhould ſuppoſe I can deſerve,—that of my exalting myſelf beyond what I have a right to do; but, though to rank and fortune I have no claims, yet I have the ſtrongeſt to principle and honour, becauſe I never have forfeited either, and never will I form a connexion with any perſon whom I know to have done ſo. I have only one favour to aſk, ſir, of you, which is, that you will *never* mention this ſubject to me again."

She then turned away into a path that led to the houſe. He ſtood in confuſion, having been really awed by her manner, into which ſhe threw a good deal of diſdain.

But Mr. Corbet was not one of thoſe violent tempers, which generally blaze out in conſequence of diſappointment. He had acquired the art of commanding himſelf on moſt occaſions, and very ſeldom gave the reins to ſudden paſſion. He conſidered the cauſe of this behaviour, and was inclined to think

think that, in her dependent ſituation, ſhe would in her heart rejoice to liſten to honourable propoſals from him; but he wiſhed to obtain her upon his own terms. He had too good an opinion of himſelf likewiſe to think that ſhe could diſlike him, and was rather inclined to attribute her conduct to *jealouſy*. Perhaps ſhe had heard of his affair with Nancy, and, though he had no reaſon to flatter himſelf with having made much impreſſion upon Ethelinda's heart at preſent, yet all women, he thought, were ſo open to vanity, that they could not bear a man ſhould bow at any ſhrine but their own, and he believed that ſhe had ſo warmly reſented his profeſſions to her, only becauſe ſhe knew of them elſewhere.

O man, man! when you thus argue, is not thy own vanity at leaſt equal to that which thou art imagining is confined to the other ſex, and mayeſt thou not as eaſily be the dupe of it?

Ethelinda got home as faſt ſhe could, and, deſiring Mrs. Manſel to go with her into

her room, related every circumſtance that had occurred ſince they parted, the extraordinary reception ſhe met with from Nancy, and the impertinence of Mr. Corbet's behaviour in the wood.

Mrs. Manſel ſeemed aſtoniſhed at what ſhe told her of Nancy, and ſaid ſhe could by no means account for it, and, indeed, unleſs ſhe had been let as much into the ſecret workings of Mr. Corbet's mind, and the effects of them, as our readers have been, ſhe could not eaſily reconcile ſuch ſeeming contradictions; for, if Nancy had not given him up, or he forſaken her, why all the acknowledgments, and ſeemingly repentant behaviour of the evening before? and, in that caſe, the ſudden recovery of her health and ſpirits was as ſurpriſing; but the paper, which Ethelinda ſaw put with ſuch haſte and confuſion into her boſom, after ſome doubts and conſideration, led them to the truth in regard to Nancy. Though ſhe was much alarmed on her own account, ſhe had not a diſtant ſuſpicion of

his

his daring to have any diſhonourable views towards her. Such an idea was the fartheſt from her mind; but ſhe dreaded Lady Falkner's wiſhes. She feared her poſitive refuſal of him would greatly hurt her beloved benefactreſs, and incenſe the reſt of his family, who would think he did her too much honour by his addreſſes, and would be enraged at her preſuming to reject the offers of a perſon, who, in their opinion, was in every reſpect ſo much her ſuperior.

She reſolved to mention the affair to her excellent friend, Mr. Hall, and at leaſt to gain him over to her ſide, and to perſuade him to exert, in her favour, his intereſt with Lady Falkner, in caſe ſuch exertion ſhould be neceſſary. She was determined to behave with the greateſt reſerve to Mr. Corbet, leſt, after what had paſſed, he ſhould miſconſtrue any civility from her.

The Hillſworth's family were expected on that day, and ſhe was in hopes the Corbets would not ſtay a great while longer, and

was determined, if poſſible, to avoid giving Mr. Corbet an opportunity of ſaying any thing to her in private.

It was Mr. Hall's uſual cuſtom to ſpend two or three hours with her on Mondays and Thurſdays, and ſhe impatiently expected his arrival. It was to him, as we ſaid before, that ſhe chiefly owed her internal endowments. She had gained ſo much from his inſtructions, as not only to be miſtreſs of French and Italian, but to underſtand Latin tolerably well, to be well verſed in hiſtory, and to have acquired a reliſh for general knowledge. Geography and aſtronomy often engaged their attention, and the good old man, whoſe life, at leaſt the early part of it, had been ſpent in fruitleſs endeavours to regulate the paſſions of the two young men to whom he was tutor, and who, in ſpite of his excellent example, turned out the exact reverſe of every thing he wiſhed them to be, now had the ſatisfaction of ſeeing an amiable young creature, who, with the ſincereſt gratitude, gave him continual

continual thanks for having cultivated the ſeeds of virtue in her mind, and for having taught her to revere an excellence of heart above every other ſpecies of endowment.

"My dear child, (would this worthy man often ſay,) do not be caught by the ſuperficial appearance of merit. It is but too frequently mere outſide ſhew; and be aſſured it has no ſolid foundation where the principles of religion are wanting. The honour and virtue that are without that baſis will ſtand no ſevere trials. What is formed only by the world, the world will have the power of ſubverting, but what is built upon the baſis of religion will ſtand its ground."

Ethelinda's natural temper made her enter warmly into every thing that engaged her purſuit. Unlike the generality of young women, or, I might ſay, the world, ſhe did not pin her faith, in matters which ſhe conceived of the higheſt importance, upon any private opinion. She thought that it

was

was right to give a reaſon for the belief ſhe profeſſed; and, as I have ſaid before, made herſelf as much miſtreſs as ſhe could of the points which ſhe conſidered as the moſt important.

Ethelinda had ſo early been taught to diſtinguiſh between virtue and vice, to revere the one, and abhor the other, that ſhe felt an abſolute averſion to every perſon whom ſhe thought addicted to the latter, and was aſtoniſhed when Mr. Hall told her that there were but very few vices which made the poſſeſſors of them the worſe received by the world.

We muſt here digreſs for a moment, to join in opinion with Mr. Hall, that it is a ſhocking conſideration, and very lowering to human nature, to know that an unprincipled libertine, who glories in the ruin of innocence, ſhould be as well received by women in general, as the man who would loſe the laſt drop of his blood in its defence.

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Our heroine was too great an advocate in the cauſe of virtue in general, not to be diſguſted at the world's inattention to a point ſhe thought ſo eſſential.

We ſhall now ſee her repreſenting her fears, relative to Mr. Corbet, of whoſe depravity of heart ſhe had lately had ſo convincing a proof. Her worthy tutor came at the uſual time; her countenance was too expreſſive of her feelings for him not immediately to ſee that ſomething was amiſs.

"What is the matter, my dear Miſs Claremont? (interrogated the good old man.) You are not well, or ſomething vexes you."

She was ſilent, for now it was come to the point, ſhe felt embarraſſed, and hardly knew how to tell him what ſhe apprehended. She coloured, and heſitated, and the tears ran down her cheeks.

"Tell me, my dear child, what affects you ſo much. Be aſſured, you cannot confide

fide in a friend more desirous of serving you."

"Indeed, sir, (replied Ethelinda,) I am sure of that; but perhaps my fears, upon the present occasion, are greater than they need be, but I hope you will not be displeased with me.—I am afraid—I am very very uneasy,"— and there stopped.

"What is it makes you uneasy, my dear child? Tell me, I beg of you."

"Why, sir, — it is,— it is Mr. Corbet's behaviour. He is a man I cannot esteem. I am sure that you do not esteem him, and I have too much reason to think that he entertains sentiments for me that I never can return. Now, though I am sensible that he does me a great deal of honour, I should be miserable, (dependent and humble as my situation is) were I to be united to such a man. I am a child of my beloved benefactress's bounty, and I owe every thing under heaven to her and to you, my good sir, and I dread the appearance of being ungrateful; but I would sooner work, or beg, than unite myself to a man I think so

ſo ill of, and that my heart abhors; and I have too much reaſon to fear, that, to promote a union between him and me, is not only the intention, but the moſt earneſt wiſh of Lady Falkner. You, my dear good ſir, know all her thoughts, and, if you can tell me that I am miſtaken, you will make me very very happy."

She then pauſed, and ventured to look up to Mr. Hall. He ſat ſilent for a moment, and then ſaid, "That you are right in your ſuſpicions, my dear Miſs Claremont, I will not deny; for I believe it is the ſupreme wiſh of Lady Falkner's heart to ſee you married to her nephew. But I think too well of her, to ſuppoſe, that, when ſhe knows how averſe you are to ſuch an union, ſhe will preſs it any farther. We have had many converſations on the ſubject, and I expect that it will very ſhortly come to an éclairciſſement. I will likewiſe own to you, that I am pleaſed with the opinion you have formed of Mr. Corbet, which is but too juſt. He is, I am ſorry to ſay, one of the moſt unprincipled young men

men I ever knew. He is artful, ſpecious, and deſigning. I have carefully obſerved his conduct towards you, and I muſt confeſs that I am at a loſs to unravel the meaning of it. That he likes you, I believe is certain. Without a fear of making you too vain, I may venture to affirm that it is next to impoſſible he ſhould not; but there is a reſerve about him, relative to you, which perplexes me, and I know not what to make of it. However, I will this day converſe freely with Lady Falkner upon the ſubject, if ſhe ſhould give me the opportunity by renewing it; otherwiſe, I think it will be better to ſay but little upon it at preſent, that we may not prematurely bring forward what may be productive of much uneaſineſs to her and you."

Ethelinda concurred in his opinion, and felt much eaſier from knowing that Mr Hall approved of her ſentiments, and would intereſt himſelf in ſupporting them;—but ſhe was preſently to receive a piece of intel-

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ligence that would give her feeling heart more pain than it had ever yet experienced.

Mr. Hall entered, more particularly than uſual, into ſeveral intereſting ſubjects, and then ſaid, "You will be ſurpriſed, my dear Miſs Claremont, to hear that I am going to leave you for ſome months, perhaps longer."

Ethelinda changed colour, and, with a faltering voice exclaimed, "Leave us!"

"Yes, (continued Mr. Hall;) you know that I have an only brother, ſettled at Liſbon. He has been very anxious that we may meet once more before we die It is twenty years ſince I have ſeen him. His ill ſtate of health makes it impoſſible for him to come to me.

"I had a letter from him yeſterday, which has determined me to undertake the journey. He urges me to do ſo, by all the affection that ſubſiſted between us in the early part of our lives. He indeed wiſhes that we might cloſe them together. He

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is ſo far declined, as to believe he cannot ſurvive many months, and I can no longer delay yielding to his wiſhes and ſolicitations. I am bleſſed with good health, and cannot refuſe him. I ſhould be miſerable for the remainder of my days, if I did ſo; and yet, my dear Ethelinda, I have ſuch a paternal affection for you, that I feel the moſt anxious ſolicitude for your ſafety and welfare; but I cannot doubt of either; and I truſt that, when I return, which I fully intend, I ſhall find you at leaſt as happy as I leave you."

The tears fell down the good old man's cheek, while Ethelinda, unable to ſpeak, took him round the neck, and ſobbed upon his venerable boſom.

"O my dear friend, my father! (ſhe cried,) we ſhall never never meet again.—I feel a ſomething that tells me we never ſhall."—

"My deareſt child, (ſaid Mr. Hall,) it is the firſt time your amiable feelings have bee

been tried in this way; but I hope much better things than you apprehend. If my good brother ſhould recover, I ſhall moſt certainly return in the ſpring; if he ſhould not, I ſhall return ſooner; therefore do not let us anticipate a misfortune which, I truſt, is not likely to happen. I ſhould not have mentioned my going to you this morning, but am obliged to ſet off to-morrow, as I muſt ſtay a few days in London, and wiſh to make all the diſpatch in my power. I have nothing to ſettle here, as I never truſt to the uncertainty of to-morrow what I can do to-day: I therefore always ſtand prepared, to the beſt of my power, for any journey I may be called upon to take. But let me ſee you cheer up, my good girl. I am going immediately to impart this to Lady Falkner, and to take my leave of her, and ſhall ſpeak, or not, my opinions concerning her intentions relative to Mr. Corbet, accordingly as I ſhall ſee ſhe is diſpoſed. But make yourſelf eaſy upon that ſubject, for I ſhall hope to hear from you conſtantly, and ſhall as conſtantly write to both

both you and Lady Falkner, and equally have the power of giving her my ſentiments, as if I were here: and now, my amiable young friend, I muſt bid you an unwilling adieu. I have no fears of not finding you at my return, in every reſpect, as worthy of my affection as at this unpleaſant moment, when I muſt leave you."

The worthy old man then gave her a hearty and paternal embrace, and left her ſo choaked with tears and grief, that ſhe had ſcarcely the power of ſobbing out, "Heaven bleſs and preſerve you, my ever-loved and revered friend!"

She ſat down in a chair to recover herſelf; and, by giving free vent to her tears, ſoon became more compoſed, though ſhe felt ſuch a heavineſs of heart as ſhe before had never experienced.

About an hour after, Lady Falkner came in, and found her quite loſt in thought. The ſight of Lady Falkner made her again burſt

burſt into tears, and ſhe exclaimed, "O my dear madam, I am afraid we ſhall never ſee our dear good friend Mr. Hall any more."

"Why ſhould you think ſo, my dear girl? Don't give way to ſuch melancholy, and, I truſt, groundleſs apprehenſions. I knew you would be grieved at parting with him, but we have long known that he had thoughts of going, and it is right he ſhould do ſo."

"Very true, madam, (replied Ethelinda,) but I feel to have loſt a great deal in loſing him; yet, while I am bleſſed with you, and your goodneſs to me, it is wicked in me to repine at any thing. I hope you are not angry with me."

"Angry with you, my love! (replied Lady Falkner,) how can I be angry with you for what is amiable? But come, we will take a walk. You muſt recover yourſelf, or you will not be fit for company."

"Might I not be excuſed from appearing?" demanded Ethelinda.

"Oh! by no means, my dear! (ſaid Lady Falkner.) It would in every reſpect be

wrong; firſt, to indulge yourſelf by giving way to too much concern; I ſay too much for I doubt not we ſhall ſee the worthy man again in a few months; then it would be very uncivil to the company; and, I fancy (added ſhe, with a ſmile,) a very great mortification to ſome people;" upon ſaying which, ſhe took Ethelinda's paſſive hand and led her into the garden, where ſhe endeavoured to amuſe her, by ſhewing her ſome curious new birds that ſhe had juſt received, and conſulting her about ſome alterations ſhe intended to make in the menagerie.

Lady Falkner inquired if ſhe had ſeen the reſt of the family ſince breakfaſt. Ethelinda ſaid that ſhe believed they were all gone out on horſe-back, but ſhe had been in her dreſſing-room ever ſince breakfaſt, and had not ſeen any body but Mr. Hall;—and then the tears, in ſpite of her utmoſt endeavours, again ran down her cheeks. Lady Falkner kiſſed them off, and, after endeavouring with much tenderneſs to revive her

her ſpirits, told her it was quite time for her to dreſs for dinner, and bid her make haſte to do ſo.

Ethelinda obeyed, and, turning into a walk that was a nearer way home, perceived on the ground, cloſe to her feet, a piece of folded paper. She took it up, and read as follows.

"The not meeting you this morning, my 'deareſt creature, was a great diſappoint-'ment to me. I wiſhed to have ſettled our 'plan, but ſuppoſe you were hindered 'from coming: —— however will tell you 'every thing. You may eaſily contrive it, by pretending a diſlike to remain here, and wiſhing to go immediately, which I am impatient for your doing. I hope you are not ſo fooliſh as to be uneaſy about your rival, as you call her. Be aſſured ſhe is the laſt woman I ſhould like; I almoſt hate her; ſo, my dear, dear girl, you may be quite at eaſe on her account, and I hope ſoon on every other I ſhall be quite impatient till you are

" in a place, where I can assure you, my
" dear creature, how much I am, for ever,
" Your's,
——"

This scrawl was not signed, but the hand, though attempted to be disguised, she knew to be Mr. Corbet's.

Indignation flushed her cheek. She just then heard the trampling of horses, and saw him, with his sister, &c. come in from riding. She concealed herself till they had passed by, and then went a back way into the house. She put the paper into her pocket, and had no doubts of its having been lost by, or meant for Nancy, and she thought the rival alluded to must be herself. It confirmed her bad opinion of, and hatred to, Mr. Corbet.

Indeed, she was extremely perplexed to know how she should so far be able to disguise her feelings, as to be commonly civil to him before Lady Falkner, and the rest of the

the family. In the morning, ſhe ſeldom ſaw any of them after breakfaſt, as ſhe and they ſpent their time in a very different manner, and, except ſhe accidentally rode out with them, they never met till dinner-time.

Ethelinda would gladly have been excuſed joining the company; a variety of circumſtances had occupied her mind: none of them produced agreeable reflections. The loſs of her truly-eſteemed friend, Mr. Hall, of itſelf gave a melancholy turn to her thoughts; his kindneſs and friendſhip occurred continually to her, and ſhe could ſcarcely keep the tears out of her eyes. The unprincipled and very extraordinary conduct of Mr. Corbet hurt and alarmed her; and, above all, the apprehenſion, of Lady Falkner's being ſolicitous in his favour, raiſed in her mind very bitter ſenſations, and ſuch as ſhe never before had experienced.

As the time of dinner was now approaching, ſhe thought it neceſſary to endeavour

to do ſomething towards diſſipating the gloom on her mind and countenance. She was ſcarcely able in any degree to effect this, when ſhe was obliged to make her appearance in the drawing-room.

Her looks, always charming, had ſomething particularly intereſting in them to-day. The melancholy turn of her mind, which, in ſpite of all her endeavours, preponderated, threw an additional ſoftneſs and languor into her manner, that could not fail of attracting particular notice. When ſhe entered the room, the whole party was aſſembled. The gentlemen came up to her immediately, and ſcarcely ſuffered her to pay her compliments to Lady Hillſworth and Lady Diana, ſo eager where they in their attentions. Lady Hillſworth was civil, but cold. Lady Diana made her a formal courteſy, without ſaying a word, which made Ethelinda draw back from a ſeat ſhe was going to take next her. Lady Falkner perceived it, and, not accounting for ſuch behaviour, " ſaid, My love, here is a chair

by me; don't ſit ſo near the door;" and, when Ethelinda approached, ſhe ſaid, taking her hand, and looking moſt tenderly on her, "I am happy, Lady Hillſworth, to have an opportunity myſelf of preſenting, to you and Lady Diana, my beloved Miſs Claremont. I am ſure ſhe will do credit to whatever degree of friendſhip you may honour her with."

Such diſtinguiſhed affection, ſo pointedly marked, gave a total change to the appearance of things. Lady Falkner was a woman, ſo very reſpectable in every point of view, that people looked up to her, and ſhe had generally the lead upon all occaſions.

The method ſhe now took of introducing Miſs Claremont convinced the Hillſworths that ſhe meant to have her treated as her daughter. Before this, they had imagined that, though Lady Falkner was very kind to her, (in the common acceptation of the

phraſe,) yet ſhe was, as moſt *protégés* are, made many times every day to feel her dependence; but, as ſoon as they ſaw the footing ſhe was upon, Lady Hillſworth, willing to pay her court to Lady Falkner, immediately, with a moſt affable air, enquired how ſhe got home after the ball, and how ſhe had been entertained there, ſaying ſhe had ſcarcely time to ſpeak to her the morning afterwards.

Lady Diana ſaid, that, for her part, ſh was hardly awake when ſhe came to breakfaſt; and ſhe owned, that, after going t bed ſo late, ſhe thought it dreadful to ge up ſo ſoon; that ſhe was never half ſo muc fatigued with a ball in town, as with on in the country.

"But you forget, Lady Diana, (replie Lady Falkner,) that Miſs Claremont is n judge of the compariſon; and, for m part, I do not very clearly ſee whence t difference can ariſe."

"O dear ma'am! (replied Lady Diana,) why a ball in town is quite a different thing, one meets ſo much later, — ſeldom till after the opera is over; and one knows every body, and of courſe has ſo many more people to ſpeak to, and people are ſo much better dreſſed;—and, to be ſure, the men one meets are ſo very different,—one is engroſſed every minute."

"I will grant, (anſwered Lady Falkner,) on account of the many good reaſons your ladyſhip has given, that you may prefer a town-ball to a country one; but I will not grant, according to your ſtatement of the caſe, it is leſs fatiguing. However, next winter Miſs Claremont ſhall be qualified to be umpire between us, for it is my intention to be ſome months in town, principally to let my dear girl ſee, as well as hear of, the charms of London."

"I believe, (cried Lord Hillſworth,) that Miſs Claremont will find no charms there equal to thoſe ſhe will carry with her."

"Huſh, huſh! my Lord, (ſaid Lady Falkner;) though I know Miſs Claremont will not eaſily be made vain, yet you can eaſily make her bluſh; and truth, you know, my lord, muſt not always be ſpoken."

"I wiſh it might," whiſpered Capt. Aſhley to Ethelinda, who felt gratified, and yet diſtreſſed, at the kindneſs of Lady Falkner.

Tears of gratitude and confuſion filled Ethelinda's eyes, and ſhe felt that ſort of choaking that made her unable to anſwer Capt. Aſhley, who continued talking to her, but not in a ſtile to add in the leaſt to her diſtreſs.

He ſaw that her ſpirits were unhinged, and that a penſive air, in ſpite of her endeavours to the contrary, denoted ſome degree of uneaſineſs in her mind. He wiſhed to inveſtigate the cauſe, but knew not how to ſet about it.

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The day paſſed on, as ſuch days in ſuch parties generally do, in formality, civility, and inſipidity. Its concluſive events muſt be the ſubject of another chapter.

CHAP. VIII.

In which Ill-nature is juſtified, Good-nature condemned, and human Nature diſplayed.

TOWARDS evening a walk was propoſed, and the young people determined to go to a curious piece of ruins, which was near two miles off.

When they were nearly arrived at the ſpot, they ſaw a ſhabby-looking man, ſitting

againſt a buſh, by the ſide of the road. Mr. Corbet and Lady Diana were firſt. The poor man begged they would aſſiſt him, as he had been much hurt by a fall from his horſe, and was unable to help himſelf.

They immediately agreed that he was ſome impoſtor, and Lady Diana ſaid ſhe did not ſee what buſineſs he could have in ſuch a place, and turned back to the reſt of the company, declaring that ſhe ſhould be quite frightened if there were not ſo many, for that ſhe thought he moſt likely had aſſociates not far off.

Ethelinda, whoſe maxim it was never to judge ill of any one without good reaſon, and who always wiſhed to relieve every living creature that appeared in diſtreſs, ſaid ſhe thought they ought to make ſome farther enquiries, and not ſuppoſe the poor man an impoſtor, without more ground for it.

Lady Diana replied, that, for her part, ſhe dared to ſay he was ſome impoſtor, or

common

common beggar, and ſhe had never any notion of encouraging ſuch people.

Miſs Corbet ſaid ſhe was quite of her ladyſhip's opinion; but Ethelinda, not being convinced by theſe humane arguments, perſevered in her reſolution of enquiring into the truth of what the man had ſaid; and, ſtepping up to him, deſired to know more particularly what injury he had received, and how his accident had happened.

The poor man endeavoured to raiſe himſelf, but could not ſtand, and, in a faint voice, ſaid he was travelling, had loſt his way, and that his horſe had thrown him, and he was greatly hurt, he believed dangerouſly; that he had but juſt come to himſelf, and did not know how long he had laid there.

His pale looks and faltering voice quite convinced Ethelinda of the truth of his ſtory, and ſhe told Capt. Aſhley, who was the only perſon near her, that ſhe was very deſirous of helping him, but knew not how

to get him conveyed to a farm-houſe which was not a hundred yards off, and within ſight.

He replied, he would do any thing towards aſſiſting him, and was going to get the other gentlemen to help him, when they ſaw two farmer's men belonging to the houſe, who, upon being called, preſently came to their aſſiſtance, and raiſed up the poor man.

Mr. Corbet then returned, and aſked Ethelinda what ſhe was going to do.

She replied, with ſome ſeverity, to endeavour to prevent this poor wretch from dying for want of aſſiſtance.

He then begged ſhe would command him, if he could be of any uſe, and declared it was only in conſideration of the fears of the ladies that he did not offer his ſervices ſooner.

Ethelinda deſired he would return again to the ladies, for Lord Hillſworth and Capt. Aſhley had kindly ſaid they would wait for her, and ſhe ſhould certainly ſtay till the apothecary

apothecary came, whom ſhe had ſent for from the village; and, as the evening was fine, ſhe had no doubt but that ſhe ſhould get home ſafely. She then walked on with the poor man, followed by Lord Hillſworth and Capt. Aſhley.

Mr Corbet was obliged to return to the other ladies, who were walking forward, and whom he could not leave to go home by themſelves, though he was inwardly vexed at the occurrence, ſeeing he had unguardedly given to Ethelinda freſh cauſe of diſpleaſure, if not diſguſt, and Capt. Aſhley, of whoſe attentions to her he was already jealous, had now an opportunity of ſhining at his expence.

When they arrived at the farm, the poor man gave looks of the ſincereſt gratitude, for he could hardly ſpeak. Ethelinda ordered a bed for him, and every thing that was neceſſary. When the ſurgeon came, he declared that the contuſion on his head appeared to be of a deſperate nature, and that the

the violent ſickneſs he had, was very alarming, but that every thing in his power ſhould be done for him

Ethelinda gave the ſtricteſt charge to the people of the houſe to be attentive, and ſaid ſhe ſhould be there early in the morning.

The other ladies got home long before her, and Lady Falkner, ſeeing only four of the party, enquired after the remainder. "Indeed, (cried Lady Diana,) I have been frightened almoſt out of my wits."

"Bleſs me! what is the matter? (cried Lady Falkner;) where is Ethelinda?"

"That is more than I can tell your ladyſhip, (anſwered Lady Diana.) She is gone with a man, who I believe only pretended to be hurt by a fall from his horſe. For my part, I think his appearance was very ſuſpicious, but Miſs Claremont has had him carried to a farm-houſe, and is gone with him there."

"Pray

"Pray, Mr. Corbet, (cried Lady Falkner,) what is this? where is Miſs Claremont gone, and who is with her?"

"She is, madam, (anſwered Mr. Corbet,) as Lady Diana has told your ladyſhip, gone to farmer Williams's with the man, who ſays he is much hurt, and perhaps may be ſo. I ſhould gladly have attended Miſs Claremont, but could not leave theſe ladies to return by themſelves; and their ſpirits were ſo much agitated, they could not ſtay. You need not be under any apprehenſions for Miſs Claremont; ſhe is well guarded by Lord Hillſworth and Capt. Aſhley,"

"That ſhe ſhould wiſh to relieve any one in diſtreſs is perfectly conſiſtent with her benevolent heart, and I approve of her intention; but I have yet to learn who the perſon is that is hurt, and where you found him."

"As to who he is, we know no more than your ladyſhip, and we found him by the road-ſide."

"I think he will prove an impoſtor," cried Miſs Corbet.

"I

"I think it fortunate we were not robbed, (cried Lady Diana.) Such pretences often cover bad deſigns."

"Do, my dear ladies, (ſaid Lady Falkner,) ſuſpend your judgments till Miſs Claremont's return. I doubt not but ſhe will ſoon detect the impoſition, if there is any; but ſhe would not act like herſelf, if ſhe neglected to aſſiſt a fellow-creature in diſtreſs, merely on the preſumption of his being an impoſtor."

In about an hour the ſweet girl appeared. She begged pardon of the ladies for having left them. "But (continued ſhe) I cannot repent of having done ſo, nor will you, I am ſure, be diſpleaſed with me, when you hear that the poor creature you ſaw is an object of great diſtreſs."

"And what have you done, my dear?" cried Lady Falkner.

"I ſent for Mr. Lilley, and he thinks the poor man's hurt a very dangerous one, but has promiſed, and I am ſure will do ſo, to take all the care of him he can. Mrs. Williams

Williams has assured me that she will sit up with him, and I hope to hear to-morrow that he is in a fair way of doing well."

"Have you found out who he is, my dear?" said Lady Falkner.

"No, madam, I have not: the poor man is not in a situation to answer any questions; but, perhaps, to-morrow—

"Oh! no matter, (cried Lady Falkner;) only in case he had any friends."—

"I wished (answered Ethelinda) on that account to have known, but he could not inform me, and he had no paper or letter in his pocket that gave any information. He does not appear to be a gentleman by his dress; I rather believe him to be some tradesman."

"Most likely some *low* person," cried Lady Diana.

"Not the less an object of charity, (answered Lady Falkner;) perhaps the greater, as on his life may depend the subsistence of a family."

"I

"I hope not, (anſwered Ethelinda, tear ſtarting in her eyes,) for I fear he may no live."

"O Miſs Claremont! (whiſpered Capt Aſhley,) what an ornament you are to hu man nature!"

Lady Hillſworth, who had been out o the room, juſt then returned. She entere into the event with common-place feelin and unintereſting obſervations, and the con verſation took another turn.

The Hillſworths had been perſuaded t ſtay till next day, when they were to purſu their journey to town. Lady Diana an Miſs Corbet had commenced a violent i timacy. I cannot ſo far profane the nam of friendſhip, as to give their ſudden attac ment that ſacred title;—ſacred, indeed! an only to be found among thoſe who poſſe good ſenſe, good nature, and benevole hearts.

The vicious may aſſume the name,
But cannot feel ſo pure a flame,
Or its juſt laws obey.—

M

Miſs Corbet went with Lady Diana to her room, when Lady Diana exclaimed, "Well, my dear Miſs Corbet, I never ſaw any thing like Lady Falkner's partiality for Miſs Claremont: ſhe quite idolizes her. Her will abſolutely ſeems a law. I am ſure I ſhould hate her, if I were you, who have ſo much better a right to be a favourite; and I declare to you, I am quite frightened about my brother. He ſeems abſolutely in love with her."

"Why, I think he does, (replied Miſs Corbet.) She is certainly very inſinuating, and I dare ſay, if you were to ſtay here long, you would catch the contagion, and be very fond of her likewiſe."

"Who, I? (anſwered Lady Diana;) not I, indeed! I never could bear upſtarts, and I ſhould not like her a bit the better for all the fuſs that is made with her. It would make me quite angry.—It is a very odd ſtory after all: I wonder who and what ſhe is; but I dare ſay the daughter of ſome trumpery perſon or other, that nobody knows."—

"And

"And nobody ever will know, I ſuppoſe, (anſwered Miſs Corbet;) but I think her very likely to marry extremely well, the men all admire her ſo much, and ſhe is to go to town next winter. My aunt you hear goes on purpoſe." "Yes, yes, I heard what ſhe ſaid; and ſhall you, my dear, be much with her?"

"O dear, yes! (replied Miſs Corbet;) and I really have a great regard for her, though I cannot ſay but I think my aunt does make rather too much fuſs with her, conſidering every thing."

They then entered into future plans, ſettled a correſpondence, and parted for the night, without a grain more of real regard for each other than they had for the object of their mutual envy.

Ethelinda retired to her pillow with very different feelings. She enjoyed the ſatisfaction of having been uſeful to a fellow-creature in diſtreſs, and with the reflection, that, ſhould he prove unworthy, it would not alter

alter the beneficence of her intentions, or render her leſs willing to do, on a ſimilar occaſion, what ſhe conſidered as her duty.

She aroſe very early the next morning, determined to go to the farm herſelf, and enquire after the man. When ſhe came there, ſhe had the ſatisfaction of finding, though very ill, that he had ſome favourable ſymptoms; that he ſeemed more compoſed, and was recovering his ſenſes, but not ſufficiently for them to make out who or what he was.

Ethelinda ſaid ſhe would call again in the afternoon, and gave ſtrict injunctions with regard to care, &c.

As ſhe was returning home, ſhe met Capt. Aſhley, who, gueſſing where ſhe was gone, was at no loſs for a reaſon for walking that way. He every hour felt his admiration of her increaſe, and reſolved, when he returned from London, where he was going upon an affair of importance, to declare

clare his ſentiments to her, and to Lady Falkner.

He had been, from the firſt moment of his ſeeing Ethelinda, charmed with her perſon, and he was now equally ſo with her mind.

After the uſual compliments, "Tell me, (ſaid he,) amiable Miſs Claremont, is your beneficence likely to be rewarded? is the object of your compaſſion better?"

"Yes, (replied Ethelinda;) though ſtill very bad, I have great hopes of his doing well, but cannot be ſure they are well grounded till Mr. Lilley has ſeen him."

"Ah! (cried Capt. Aſhley,) how various is your conduct!—Who could ſuppoſe ſuch oppoſite effects to ariſe from it?"

"Various in my conduct,—oppoſite effects!—What do you mean?" interrogated Ethelinda.

"Why, (replied Capt. Aſhley,) you kindly contribute to the cure of one while you are deeply wounding another."

Ethelinda

Ethelinda was too penetrating not to un-
erſtand his alluſion. The colour roſe in
er cheeks, and with ſome heſitation ſhe re-
lied, that ſhe ſhould be ſorry to hurt any
ne.

Capt. Aſhley was juſt going to anſwer,
hen Mr. Corbet appeared. Having en-
uired for Capt. Aſhley, and learned which
ay he was gone, he immediately went in
urſuit of him, and was not perfectly plea-
d at the tête-à-tête he diſcovered; but,
ſſuming an air of indifference, aſked Miſs
laremont if ſhe had found her protégé
here ſhe had left him, or if he had run
way

She replied, in a pointed manner, that
e had not yet ſo bad an opinion of the
orld, as to believe *every* one ſhe met with
ere diſſemblers.

Mr. Corbet felt diſconcerted, but turned
e converſation by ſaying he believed Lady
alkner would be impatient for her breakfaſt.

Ethelinda

Ethelinda was glad to return home as fast as ſhe could, in order to get rid of one man ſhe almoſt deteſted, and of another whoſe conduct now embarraſſed her very much.

Soon after breakfaſt the Hillſworths went away. Lady Falkner had obſerved Capt. Aſhley's particular attention to Miſs Claremont. She joined her commendation of him to that of others, and would have been pleaſed with overtures from him to Ethelinda, had not there been ſo favourite a deſign in the way as a marriage between her nephew and this beloved girl.

She was conſidering how to act, when the ſervant announced Mr. Benfield. The uſual compliments over, he begged to know if he might have the honour of a quarter of an hour's uninterrupted converſation with her ladyſhip. Upon her aſſenting, he told her that he ſolicited this interview upon an occaſion that was very important to his happineſs, and on which he was very anxious to

to gain her intereſt in his favour, and he hoped what he meant to offer would meet with her approbation.

He then made profeſſions of his attachment to Miſs Claremont, ſaid he had been to London to adjuſt ſome neceſſary law-matters, and told Lady Falkner that he would ſettle as much of his eſtate as ſhe thought proper, and was proceeding to particulars, when Lady Falkner ſaid that ſhe muſt beg to ſtop him, as there were many things previouſly to be attended to: the firſt and moſt material was Miſs Claremont's concurrence.

He replied, he had not made any direct propoſals to her, but flattered himſelf that his meaning had been underſtood by Miſs Claremont, and he did not ſee in her manner any thing unfavourable to his hopes.

Lady Falkner anſwered, that ſhe could not think Miſs Claremont had meant to give encouragement to them, though ſhe had never exchanged a word with her upon the ſubject; and that, for her own part,

would frankly inform him, that ſhe had other views for Miſs Claremont, which ſhe was very ſolicitous ſhould ſucceed, and it would be a great mortification to her to be diſappointed in them.

Mr. Benfield appeared chagrined, but hoped Lady Falkner would not be againſt his urging his wiſhes to Miſs Claremont.

Lady Falkner objected to this, and told him, ſhe thought it would be much better that they ſhould be communicated by her, at the ſame time declared to him, that, however intereſted in favour of another, ſhe would not endeavour to bias Miſs Claremont, but let her own feelings operate entirely, and aſſured him ſhe would very ſoon acquaint him with the reſult.

Mr. Benfield was forced to aſſent to theſe terms, though in his heart much diſſatisfied. He wiſhed to prolong his ſtay, but Lady Falkner evidently wiſhed him not to do ſo, and he therefore was obliged to take his leave,

leave, which he did very unwillingly, and with fainter hopes of ſucceſs than when he firſt came.

Lady Falkner's mind was engroſſed by this ſubject, and ſhe reſolved immediately to communicate it to Ethelinda, and at the ſame time endeavour to find out her opinions and inclinations with regard to Capt. Aſhley and Mr. Corbet. She was conſidering the beſt method to purſue, when her nephew entered the room. It immediately occurred to her, that ſhe had better ſound his inclinations firſt. An opening for doing ſo immediately preſented itſelf, as he aſked her if Mr. Benfield had not juſt been there.

"Yes, (replied Lady Falkner;) he has not been gone ten minutes."

"It is very odd (returned Mr. Corbet) that he did not aſk for me, which he certainly did not."

"That will appear leſs odd, (replied Lady Falkner,) when you know his reaſons for coming."

"Reaſons for coming, madam! (cried Mr. Corbet;) why, had he any particular ones?"

"I hardly know (returned Lady Falkner) whether I ought to tell you; but, as I have reaſon to believe that he has not kept his deſigns very ſecret, I think there can be no great harm in my imparting them to you, and perhaps you will become his advocate, and uſe your influence with a certain fair lady in his favour."

"What! (returned Mr. Corbet,) is he in love with my ſiſter?"

"No, (replied Lady Falkner,) you muſt gueſs again, and you cannot then eaſily miſtake."

"But your ladyſhip does very greatly, if you ſuppoſe that I have any influence over Miſs Claremont."

"I am very ſorry for it, (replied Lady Falkner;) I ſhould be glad to ſee you poſſeſs a great deal; but, perhaps, your wiſhes do not in that reſpect correſpond with mine; in which caſe, your want of influence with

with her muſt be a matter of little concern to you."

Mr. Corbet was not prepared for this attack. He was at a loſs to parry it. After heſitating a little, "It is almoſt impoſſible (he replied) for any man to be indifferent to Miſs Claremont; but—" and he heſitated again.

"But what? (cried Lady Falkner.) If your ſentiments are ſuch as I wiſh towards that excellent girl, it will indeed make me very happy. I will frankly own to you, it is the wiſh next my heart to ſee you united to each other. I do not think ſhe can have any objection to you, and I am confident that my wiſhes and my happineſs (which ſuch an union would greatly promote) would have great weight with her."

"But, my dear madam, (replied Mr. Corbet,) though I would be the firſt to pay the higheſt reſpect to your wiſhes, yet, in an affair of this kind, I muſt, to ſatisfy my own feelings, have ſomething more gratifying than that the woman I marry ſhould

merely have no objection to me, and ſhould be induced to accept of me in order to oblige another, though that perſon were your ladyſhip; and, without I could be perfectly ſatisfied of Miſs Claremont's affections, I hope you would excuſe me for refuſing even her; and, to be ſincere with you, I have reaſon to believe that ſhe is otherwiſe attached."

"Attached to whom?" cried Lady Falkner.

"To Capt. Aſhley, madam," returned Mr. Corbet.

"Indeed! (replied Lady Falkner:) I believe you are miſtaken. However, I will ſoon find that out, and ſatisfy your ſcruples."

Mr. Corbet by no means wiſhed to have things brought to that ſort of criſis. He choſe himſelf to develope that buſineſs, and to proſecute his own deſigns. He knew from Ethelinda's conduct, that, at preſent, ſhe had no partiality for him, and that, were he inclined to fetter himſelf, as he called it, her motives for conſenting would not

not be very flattering to him, and his vanity led him to hope that, by his future attention and arts, he might make that impreſſion which he had hitherto failed of doing: he therefore told Lady Falkner, that, as his feelings were very nice upon ſuch ſubjects, he muſt beg ſhe would not ſay any thing at preſent to Miſs Claremont, but leave it to him to find out how far ſhe was attached to Capt. Aſhley; and he likewiſe begged that ſhe would on no account mention the affair juſt now to his father or mother; at the ſame time aſſuring her his heart was very ſenſible to the charms of Miſs Claremont, and that nothing on his part ſhould be wanting to induce her to teturn his attachment.

Lady Falkner was highly delighted with having ſo far ſucceeded in her favourite project, and her only apprehenſion now was leſt Ethelinda ſhould really have any attachment to Capt. Aſhley. But ſhe thought their acquaintance had been of ſo very ſhort a duration, that abſence and her wiſhes

would very ſoon overcome it. She was, however, determined to ſound her about it, when ſhe ſhould tell her of Mr. Benfield's propoſals, which ſhe reſolved to do immediately, and ſent to deſire to ſpeak with her.

Miſs Claremont felt a kind of flutter at the meſſage, though ſhe often had ſimilar ones; for ſhe ſo much dreaded any overtures from Mr. Corbet, that ſhe was in continual apprehenſion of them.

Lady Falkner ſaid, with a ſmile, "Come, my dear, come, and ſit down; I have ſomething to communicate that requires your ſerious attention."

"Ethelinda coloured, and only echoed, "My ſerious attention, madam!"

"Yes, my dear girl, your ſerious attention, as what I have to ſay is connected with events of the greateſt conſequence in life; nothing leſs than the accepting or rejecting an offer of conſequence;—you will eaſily

eaſily gueſs that I mean a matrimonial one."

Ethelinda, who had no one in her head but Mr. Corbet, and nothing in her heart towards him but averſion, was quite alarmed, and thought the ſtorm ſhe ſo much dreaded was beginning to gather.

"I am,—I am, (ſhe heſitatingly ſaid,) my dear madam, ſo happy under your kind, your maternal protection, that, ſo far from having any wiſh to change my ſituation, I could not, indeed I could not bring myſelf to think of it."

"But, my dear, (replied Lady Falkner,) though I am far from wiſhing you to do any thing you diſlike, yet I will own to you, it is my firſt wiſh to ſee you happily ſettled. However, as for the preſent propoſal, I promiſed to acquaint you with it, and that is all I have to ſay about it. Mr. Benfield is the perſon, and I have acquitted myſelf in acquainting you with his ſentiments. I

muſt own, however, in juſtice to him, that his propoſals are very generous."

Ethelinda was ſo much relieved, when ſhe found Mr. Corbet was not the perſon, that ſhe inſtantly aſſumed her uſual manner, but put a determined negative upon the buſineſs, and begged Lady Falkner to acquaint him with her ſentiments in the civileſt terms poſſible, which Lady Falkner readily undertook to do.

Many minutes had not paſſed after this converſation, when Miſs Corbet came in a great hurry into the room, and ſaid that an expreſs was come to her father, and that buſineſs of importance required his returning home immediately, and that they were to ſet out that afternoon, inſtead of three days after, which was the appointed time for their going.

Lady Falkner expreſſed her concern at loſing them ſo much ſooner; but Miſs Claremont could not help in her heart rejoicing

joicing at Mr. Corbet's departure. Sir James and Lady Cecilia ſoon joined the party, and preſſed Lady Falkner to make an early viſit to Langley-Park, which ſhe promiſed to do.

Mr. Corbet in vain tried to get a few minutes private converſation with Miſs Claremont. All he could find an opportunity of ſaying was, that, though he had very little peace there, he ſhould have ſtill leſs during his abſence; and entreated her to favour him with one look leſs ſevere before they parted.

She coolly replied, that peace was generally to be acquired by thoſe who deſerved it, and ſhe had not the vanity to believe that her looks poſſeſſed the power of conveying it.

She then walked to another part of the room, and left him convinced of her present unfavourable ſentiments towards him, but by no means as to the cauſe of them.

He had obſerved, and was hurt at Capt. Aſhley's attentions, but he had not obſerved ſuch a return to them as in reality alarmed him very greatly, though he had made the moſt of it to Lady Falkner, in order to manage the affair his own way.

Soon after dinner the Corbet family all ſet off, greatly to the relief of our heroine. Lady Falkner too, would have rejoiced at their departure, had it not been for her wiſhes relative to Mr. Corbet, and her Ethelinda.

CHAP

CHAP. IX.

Contains a great Diſappointment, a Gratification, and an Alarm.

IT may ſeem extraordinary that pride ſhould be alledged as a leading motive with Lady Falkner, in uniting her nephew to a young woman of ſuch doubtful extraction; but we, who have the power of inveſtigating the moving principles of the mind, are certain it was ſo; for pride does not conſiſt entirely of parade and diſtinctions; thoſe follies are oftener the offsprings of vanity.

Lady Falkner had in a manner adopted Ethelinda. It would have gratified her to ſee

ſee the fruits of her benevolence flouriſh in the midſt of her own family. She doated upon Ethelinda, and wiſhed her to enjoy a fortune which family-pride rendered in ſome meaſure neceſſary to be appropriated to Mr. Corbet; nor did ſhe like the poſſibility of Ethelinda hereafter moving in a lower ſphere of life, than the partiality ſhe had for her led her to eſtimate as the proper one.

But, as pride is the ſubject, it will not be amiſs to ſay a few more words upon a ſentiment more miſtaken than moſt others; for ſhew and magnificence come not from the fountain-head of real pride; they may flow from ſome of its ſtreams; but real pride frequently ſhews itſelf in chooſing the moſt humiliating ſituation,—in ſpurning at the moſt glaring,—in a conſcious ſuperiority, that diſdains a mean action, though tempted to it by the moſt alluring baits. It reſiſts the inſolent, though often obſequious to the humble, and carries its votaries to the precincts of a priſon, ſooner than make itſelf liable to inſult in a palace.—But to return.

Ethelinda

Ethelinda had felt a weight upon her
nind ever ſince the laſt interview ſhe had
ad with her much valued friend Mr. Hall,
ot only from the loſs ſhe had ſuſtained in
im, but from the confirmation he had given
er of Lady Falkner's wiſhes relative to her,
nd Mr. Corbet. She felt it, however,
onſiderably leſs from the abſence of a fami-
, none of whoſe diſpoſitions were in uniſon
ith her own. She recovered her uſual ſpi-
ts, and was as lively and charming as ever,
ntering into every thing ſhe did, however
ifling, with that ſpirit and good humour
hich always carries a great degree of faſci-
ation along with it, and is ſo particularly
gaging.

A few days after the Corbets were gone,
ady Falkner introduced a converſation
out Mr. Benfield, and endeavoured to
nd out our heroine's ſentiments of Capt.
ſhley, though ſhe was determined not to
y a word concerning Mr. Corbet, but to
ave him entirely, as he requeſted, to his
wn management.

"You

"You were, my dear, (ſaid Lady Falkner, after having diſcuſſed Mr. Benfield's propoſals for ſome time,) very ſoon decided. You did not give them a moment's conſideration."

"As I was certain (anſwered Ethelinda) that I ſhould remain of the ſame opinion, I thought it more handſome to decline them at once. Conſideration would have implied heſitation, and perhaps ſubjected me to importunity, as delay poſſibly might have been conſtrued into an air of conſequence, to which I have no right to pretend."

"But (returned Lady Falkner) ſo decided a reſolution muſt take its riſe from ſome principle in the mind, and we ſeldom reſolve for, or againſt, in points of conſequence, without very weighty reaſons to decide us."

Lady Falkner fixed her eyes upon Ethelinda as ſhe ſpoke. Ethelinda felt that degree of confuſion which ſuch a ſubject (the firſt of that ſort that had occurred to her) generally creates in ſo young a creature, and ſhe

ſhe obſerved the pointed manner in which Lady Falkner ſpoke her laſt ſentence, and was rather at a loſs to account for it.

"My reſolution (ſaid Ethelinda) was formed from the conſciouſneſs of being truly happy in your ladyſhip's goodneſs to me, and feeling the higheſt degree of repugnance at the mere thought of changing my ſituation. I could not, therefore, require any time for reflection, where every impulſe of my heart declared its deciſion."

"But, my dear, are you ſure there is not a ſtill ſtronger impulſe in your heart, which, perhaps, ſcarcely known to yourſelf, is the governing principle of it."

"No, madam, (replied Ethelinda;) there is no principle of my heart which I would not lay open to you, and no atom of it that does not glow with love and gratitude towards you."

"You are a dear girl, (replied Lady Falkner;) but I muſt not wiſh to engroſs every atom of ſo valuable a heart, though I deſire

deſire to have a conſiderable ſhare of it; and there are others, I fancy, who are not indifferent to gaining a part of it. Capt. Aſhley, for inſtance, I fancy would be deſirous of rivaling me."

A conſiderable glow diffuſed itſelf over our heroine's cheeks. She had not the leaſt ſuſpicion of ſuch a ſcrutiny. She thought Capt. Aſhley an agreeable man, and had obſerved his attentions to her, (ladies, indeed, are generally pretty quick-ſighted upon theſe occaſions,) but ſhe had neither thought, nor felt deeply, upon the ſubject, and was ſurpriſed at Lady Falkner's inſinuation. She, however, immediately anſwered, that it would be a difficult thing to rival her ladyſhip, and ſhe fancied Capt. Aſhley would never attempt it, and the only wiſh ſhe had was to remain as ſhe was, bleſſed with her favour and protection.

"And are you ſincere, my dear girl, in declaring an indifference towards Capt. Aſhley?"

"Certainly

"Certainly, madam, (replied Ethelinda.) Capt. Aſhley has never ſaid a ſerious word upon this ſubject to me, and I am ſure I have never had a ſerious thought of him."

Lady Falkner was delighted with this diſcovery, and thought, though ſhe would not ſay any thing on the part of her nephew, that it was at leaſt a favourable opportunity to declare her own ſentiments; and, taking the hand of Ethelinda, ſaid, "You have made me extremely happy by this declaration, as I will own to you, it is my earneſt wiſh to ſee you united to one whoſe near relationſhip to me, will give additional ſtrength to the ties which bind us together, and, without injuſtice to others, I can then make you my daughter in every reſpect."

The event, which our poor heroine had ſo long dreaded, yet had lately flattered herſelf was at leaſt ſuſpended, now approached with haſty ſtrides. She was ſo confounded, that, for a minute, ſhe was deprived of ſpeech.

At

At laſt ſhe ſtammered out, "Your unbounded goodneſs to me, madam, has long prevented my every wiſh, except the natural one of diſcovering to whom I belong, and I may truly ſay that I can ſcarcely feel a ſanguine wiſh even for that diſcovery, ſo long as I am happy enough to be bleſſed with your regard and protection,—a protection I moſt earneſtly beg to remain under, as I am more happy in it than I ſhould be in any other ſituation."

"But, my dear Ethelinda, (returned Lady Falkner,) in uniting yourſelf with my nephew, ſo far from loſing my protection, you would enſure it for ever."

"O madam! (replied Ethelinda, burſting into tears,) ſpare me the pain of refuſing you any requeſt. It is, it will ever be my delight to obey your commands in every thing elſe;—but in that, my heart forbids an acquieſcence. There is not, indeed, deareſt madam, another thing you can requeſt, in which I would not moſt readily obey you. Were you to conſign me to

hat poverty which muſt have been my fate, ad it not been for your benevolence, I hould ſubmit without a murmur; but, to narry a man, to whom I cannot give my eart, preſents to my mind ſuch a proſpect s I ſhudder at."

"Do not, my dear Ethelinda, agitate ourſelf in this manner; you need not fear ny degree of compulſion or over-perſua- ion from me. I love you too ſincerely to iſh you to take any ſtep that would make ou unhappy, though I confeſs to you I m greatly diſappointed, as much on your ccount as on my own. I had conſidered an lliance with my nephew as a very deſirable tuation for you, and I was pleaſed to ob- erve his partiality towards you. Capt. ſhley you declare yourſelf indifferent to. ell me, has any one elſe made any impreſ- on on your heart. Be ſincere with me, my ear girl."

"Indeed, madam, (replied Ethelinda, reatly encouraged by Lady Falkner's be- aviour,) no one has, I am ſure. If I know my

my own heart, it is free from any impreſſion of the nature you mean, and it muſt undergo a great change before I can conſent to give up the happy ſituation I am in for one that muſt at beſt be uncertain. O madam! (continued ſhe, riſing, and throwing her arms about Lady Falkner's neck, permit me to pour my gratitude into your generous boſom, for not urging me farther on this ſubject."

"At preſent, my dear, (returned Lady Falkner, I will not ſay another word upon it; but, as you have no prepoſſeſſion in favour of any perſon, perhaps, in time, my nephew, who I am ſure adores you, may make an impreſſion upon your heart; but reſt aſſured, that, if he does not, I ſhall only lament the circumſtance, without blaming you."

Ethelinda, touched with the kind manner in which Lady Falkner ſpoke, was almoſt choaked with tears, and could only anſwer by kiſſing her hand in the moſt fervent manner.

Lady

Lady Falkner, wiſhing to relieve her from e agitation ſhe was in, enquired after the or man, and propoſed walking to ſee m.

Ethelinda ſaid he was ſo greatly recovered thin theſe two days, that ſhe expected to him that morning, and meant to have me converſation with him, for it had not t appeared who he was, and ſhe ſhould happy if Lady Falkner would go with r. Lady Falkner aſſented, and they ſet immediately.

They found the poor man up, and ex- eſſing his gratitude in the warmeſt terms the kindneſs that had been ſhewn him.

When the ladies entered, Mrs. Williams d, "Here is the young lady that has been good to you."

"Bleſs her! (ſaid the man,) ſhe has been at ſhe looks, an angel to me. Young y, (continued he,) if it had not been for r charity, I ſhould have died, and with me

me would moſt likely have periſhed a wife, and, (burſting into tears, it was ſome moments before he could add) four ſmall children. Your mercy, young lady, has ſaved us all, and, though I can never repay you, you may be ſure you will be rewarded.—My prayers, and my poor family's, will always follow you. Happy are they who have not only the will, but the power to relieve the wretched. My buſineſs leads me to ſee a great deal of miſery, which I heartily wiſh to relieve, but have not the power of doing it. My brother is head-goaler of —— goal: I am his aſſiſtant, and it is all I can do to live; and yet I ſometimes ſtrain a hard point to help, as far as I am able, the wretched creatures I ſo often ſee.

"I was returning from York, where I had been ſent upon ſome particular buſineſs, when I had the misfortune to be thrown from my horſe. She took fright as I was riding pretty hard, and threw me. I was ſtunned for, I believe, a great while, and had only juſt been able to raiſe myſelf up

up, when you came by. I had my ſenſes enough to hear what paſſed, and if it had not been for your humanity, (which heaven will bleſs you for, young lady,) I muſt have periſhed. The farmer here has heard of my mare, and ſays he will be kind enough to go after her to-morrow; but it is not in my power to make any amends, and I know not what to do."

"You are heartily welcome, (replied Lady Falkner,) to every thing that has been done for you. That young lady felt as much happineſs in affording you aſſiſtance, as you can have in receiving it; and ſhe will have great pleaſure, if ſhe can be of any farther uſe to you."

"Heaven bleſs you both! (cried out the poor goaler in an ecſtacy;) I ſhould be ſorry to impoſe on your goodneſs; but, in truth, I cannot afford to pay the doctor, for I have only juſt enough to carry me to London; and my poor family, I fear, are before this time unhappy enough about me, ſo that I wiſh to go, and eaſe them as ſoon as poſſible."

"By all means, (ſaid Lady Falkner;) as ſoon as ever you are able; and I am ſure your young friend here will be happy to aſſiſt you farther. As for ſatisfying the doctor, and theſe good people, leave that to her, and I very much wiſh to know the ſituation of your family."

"My family, madam, (replied the poor man,) is all my riches, and every thing in this world to me. My wife and I loved each other many a year before we married. She was a ſervant, and ſo was I, and we could not ſave much; but my brother had the good luck to get the place he now has, and, though he is not ſo generous to me as he might be, yet I am much beholden to him for putting me under him, which enabled me to marry my dear Patty, and we make ſhift to live, though we ſometimes are hard put to it. I have two as fine girls, and two as brave boys, as ever you ſaw:—but my heart aches, for fear Patty ſhould make herſelf unhappy about my being ſo long gone, without hearing from me; but now

now I can write, and will do ſo to day, though the doctor ſaid I ought not yet, but I muſt write juſt a line to ſay I am alive, and to tell her to pray for thoſe who ſaved me."

Lady Falkner deſired he would not exert himſelf by talking any more, as he was yet but weak. "But (continued ſhe) we will ſee you again in a day or two; but pray what is your name?"

"My name is Jackſon, madam; but I hope to be able to go in two days, as I am impatient to get to my family."

Ethelinda told him ſhe would call upon him the next day, and the ladies then returned home.

Their converſation naturally turned upon the poor man, and Lady Falkner aſked Ethelinda if ſhe did not feel true delight in having been the cauſe of ſaving that poor creature from death, and his family from wretchedneſs and want, which muſt have

been the conſequence of his remaining all night without help, as he moſt probably would have done, if ſhe had not exerted herſelf in the manner ſhe did.

"It is aſtoniſhing, (continued Lady Falkner,) that proſperity is ſo often the tomb of humanity. One ſhould ſuppoſe, (if every day did not evince the contrary,) that thoſe beings, who poſſeſs every luxury and comfort, would be particularly alive to the feelings of others, who are deprived of them, and commiſerate the difference of their ſituations; but it is too common to ſee the tender feelings of humanity, that were given us to be exerted towards each other, loſt in that affluence and independence where they could moſt effectually be ſhewn."

"And yet (replied Ethelinda) I ſuppoſe moſt people would be diſpleaſed at being thought deſtitute of humanity, or even tenderneſs."

"O yes! (ſaid Lady Falkner;) every one ſpeaks of them as qualities they poſſeſs, but

too frequently contrive to evade their practice In truth, not feeling their power, they are so extremely cautious, so fearful of imposition, lest *this* should not be a proper object, and *that* should be an impostor, that even wretchedness itself is not a sufficient voucher: It must bring a certificate of having more virtues in its train than these scrupulous censors themselves possess, or else it is not deserving their compassion.

"I fear we shall hereafter be called to a severe account, for the unlimited indulgence we give ourselves, and the scanty assistance we at best afford to others; and it is one of those things, to which I cannot make up my mind, how far we are justified in gratifying ourselves in almost every luxury, while hundreds within our knowledge are destitute of common necessaries. Sure I am, however, that those people, who hoard up their useless wealth, are still more culpable, and more unworthy members of society; for those even, who spend it upon themselves alone,—inattentive to the wants

of others, at leaſt in its circulation, do ſome good, though they may not intend any.

"I think, my dear, (continued Lady Falkner,) that poor man is a ſtriking object of content, and natural goodneſs of heart; for, in all probability, his merits are not the reſult of education, which I conſider as capable of working wonders, though it does not always equal one's expectations."

"Without preſuming to be a philoſopher, (replied Ethelinda,) I think it is as abſurd to deny an original difference of tempers, and diſpoſitions, as of capacity, and that natural abilities are unequal will not admit of a doubt. Whether temper may be ſuppoſed the foundation of every other propenſity I cannot tell. I ſhould think not, for there are many ill-tempered people with honeſt principles, and apparently good-tempered ones with very bad inclinations."

"We

"We had better drop this ſubject, (replied Lady Falkner,) leſt we reſemble thoſe wiſe men who puzzle themſelves ſo much to attain what is placed beyond human knowledge, that they make ſhipwreck of genius and common ſenſe together.

"But to return to poor Jackſon. I will not prevent you from the pleaſure you will have in affording him farther aſſiſtance, but I muſt give him ſomething likewiſe;" and, taking a ten-pound bank-note out of her pocket, ſhe gave it to Ethelinda for him.

CHAP. X.

Which will displease those Dispositions most worthy of being pleased.

OUR heroine felt herself much happier than she had been for some time. Lady Falkner's kind declarations, of leaving her entirely free, had re-assured her, and she came home in very good spirits.

It was her frequent custom to go after dinner to a temple in the garden to play on the harp; and, as Lady Falkner had letters to write, Ethelinda was amusing herself in her usual manner, when a servant came running to her with visible emotion and terror in his countenance. She

She ſtarted up merely from apprehenſion, and, before the man had ſpoken a word, eagerly enquired what was the matter.

"My lady is taken very ill, ma'am, returned the ſervant; but don't frighten yourſelf, continued he, ſeeing her turn pale, I hope ſhe will ſoon be better."

"Very ill! (cried Ethelinda;) O heavens! where is ſhe?"

"In her own dreſſing-room, ma'am," replied the man, and was going on; but Ethelinda ſtaid to hear no more, and almoſt flew into the houſe, and to the dreſſing-room, where ſhe indeed found Lady Falkner very ill, though ſomewhat recovered. Mrs. Manſel and another maid-ſervant were with her.

When Ethelinda found that Lady Falkner was unable to ſtand, and that ſhe faultered in her voice, ſhe was convinced that the diſorder was paralytic. She immediately diſpatched a ſervant for a phyſician, and

perſuaded Lady Falkner to go to bed. Ethelinda was extremely alarmed, and waited by her bedſide, impatiently watching for Dr. Nelſon's arrival.

When he came, he too ſurely confirmed Ethelinda's fears of the diſorder being paralytic, but aſſured her that he had ſeen many people much worſe who had recovered. He allowed that he thought her ſituation doubtful, but ſhould be able to form a more deciſive judgment in a few hours. Ethelinda felt the moſt extreme uneaſineſs, and her poor heart ſeemed ready to burſt.

Few people can judge of her uneaſineſs, for but few have been in her ſituation. Beſides the perſonal love ſhe had for Lady Falkner, ſhe felt it probable that ſhe might be deprived of her benefactreſs and protectreſs, and the only friend ſhe had in the world, excepting Mr. Hall, who was at too great diſtance to afford her any conſolation.

She

She ſat up till three o'clock, when Lady Falkner ſuddenly appeared to be much better, ſpoke to Ethelinda, and aſſured her ſhe felt herſelf ſo, and Dr. Nelſon confirmed it by his opinion. Ethelinda was kneeling by the bed-ſide, and, overcome by her ſenſations, ſhe burſt into tears, and, ſtooping over the bed, ardently kiſſed her dear friend, who begged ſhe would compoſe herſelf, and deſired to know what hour it was. On being told, ſhe inſiſted on Ethelinda's going to bed, which order ſhe very reluctantly obeyed, after having obtained the promiſe of being called in caſe Lady Falkner ſhould be worſe. The phyſician ſaid he thought her ſo much better, that he ſhould himſelf go to bed.

Theſe aſſurances made Ethelinda ſomewhat eaſier, and ſhe got a little ſleep, but was up very early in the morning, when ſhe had the happineſs to find that Lady Falkner, after a very good ſleep, had awoke greatly refreſhed and better, and Dr. Nelſon declared her ſo much mended, that he ſhould take

his leave, but would come again on the following day.

Lady Falkner ate her breakfaſt with ſome appetite, and then told Ethelinda that ſhe hoped ſhe intended going to the farmer's, to take her leave of poor Jackſon Unwilling to leave Lady Falkner, Ethelinda propoſed ſending Mrs. Manſel, but Lady Falkner inſiſted upon her going, ſaying it would do her good, and in the mean time ſhe would endeavour to get ſome more ſleep.

Ethelinda, however unwillingly, was forced to comply. When ſhe got to the farm, ſhe found poor Jackſon anxious to ſee her, as he ſaid he could not go in peace till he had once more thanked her, and he ſhould then ſet off directly.

"I am come (ſaid Ethelinda) to know if I can be of any farther uſe to you, and to perſuade you not to ſet out on your journey till it is quite ſafe for you to do ſo.

"Thanks to you for it, good young lady, (replied Jackſon;) I am quite well, and long to ſee my poor family, and the firſt thing we do, after I get to them, ſhall be to beg, upon our knees, a bleſſing on you."

"You over-rate (replied Ethelinda) the ſervice I was ſo fortunate as to do you. I did nothing more than my duty, and conſider human beings, upon ſuch occaſions, merely as the agents of Providence. But I am deſired by Lady Falkner to enquire a little more into the ſtate of your family. You ſaid you make a hard ſhift to live."

"Yes, ſo I do, (anſwered Jackſon,) and yet I am a very happy man. My family! Oh! I wiſh you could ſee my ſweet children, who are a treaſure to me. I am working up-hill a little at preſent, owing to the having loſt my furniture by a fire; but I think little of that, I am ſo thankful for the eſcape of my dear children, who, poor things, were within a minute of being conſumed in the flames.

"I

"I was out when the fire began, and, as I came home, I ſaw at a diſtance the ſad blaze, little thinking it was my poor home, till I got into the ſtreet. I then flew to the houſe, preſſed through the mob, and ſaw my wife wringing her hands, and crying, "Save! O ſave! in mercy ſave my children!" But the confuſion was ſo great, that nobody minded her. I ruſhed, in ſpite of the flames, into the houſe; a man humanely followed me, and I caught up two of my babies, and he took the others. I had ſcarcely got on the outſide of the door, when the houſe fell in. So great was the ſhock, that, the moment I had got a little out of the crowd, I fell ſenſeleſs to the ground, and, when I recovered, found myſelf in a room with my wife, ſtanding by me almoſt ſpeechleſs with horror; for ſhe, ſeeing me in that ſenſeleſs ſituation, thought the children were burnt.

"I ſoon recovered my recollection, and earneſtly enquired for them. "O my dear Stephen! (cried my wife, burſting into an agony

agony of grief,) they are loſt! O my children, my children!"

"Gone! (cried I,) loſt!—impoſſible! I ſaved them, I brought them out; I now recollect every particular."

"Saved!—are my children ſaved? (exclaimed my poor wife;) O thanks, thanks!" She could utter no more, and fainted quite away. Joy had overcome her, and, before ſhe recovered, a perſon came in, and told us they were all ſafe at his houſe; that, when I had fallen down in the ſtreet, he took the infant and the others, and carried them home with him. When Patty recovered, our joy was indeed beyond all deſcription. We fell on our knees in gratitude, to give thanks to Providence for ſo great a deliverance, and we have never repined one moment at the loſs of our goods."

"Well! (cried Ethelinda, the tears trickling down her face,) Lady Falkner ſends you this, (giving him the ten-pound note,) and from me you muſt accept of this," giving him another, and five guineas more, which

which ſhe added in conſequence of this ſtory, and which was all ſhe had in her pocket.

Aſtoniſhment for ſome moments ſealed the poor man's lips. At laſt, "Madam, madam, (ſtammered he,) what ſhall I ſay? My heart, my heart is ready to burſt! Oh! you know not what your charity has done. I have been afraid we might want a bit of bread in the end, though I tried to keep a good heart, but this will pay all, and leave me plenty. Oh! (cried he, dropping on his knees,) may heaven, *when moſt you want it*, be as good to you as you have been to me!"

Ethelinda ſobbed, and it was ſometime before ſhe recovered herſelf ſufficiently to expreſs her beſt wiſhes for his ſafety and good journey, deſiring him to ſend her a line to inform her of it.

She now made the beſt of her way home. As ſoon as ſhe got there, ſhe ran up-ſtairs, and

and was going into Lady Falkner's room, but Mrs. Manſel ſtopped her, and begged ſhe would firſt ſtep into the dreſſing-room.

Ethelinda in a moment ſaw that all was not right, and haſtily exclaimed, "How is Lady Falkner?"

"I am afraid (replied Mrs. Manſel) that ſhe is not quite ſo well as ſhe was; ſhe complains very much of her head, and is certainly feveriſh; but do, my dear Miſs Claremont, compoſe yourſelf: don't put yourſelf into ſuch an agitation," for ſhe obſerved Ethelinda turn pale, and tremble.

"Let me go to her! (cried ſhe;) ſend immediately for Dr. Nelſon." She went to the bedſide, and, taking Lady Falkner's hand, found it very hot, and that ſhe ſeemed in a diſturbed kind of ſleep.

Ethelinda ſat by her till the doctor arrived. He found her much worſe, and ſaid, though ſhe might ſtill do well, he thought it would be proper to acquaint her family with

with her ſituation. From preſent appearances, he owned he was a good deal alarmed.

Ethelinda's grief was exceſſive; but Dr. Nelſon and Mrs. Manſel did all they could to compoſe her, and ſo far ſucceeded, that in ſome time ſhe became calm. She wrote a few lines to Lady Cecilia Corbet, and ſent them off by a ſervant, and then took her place again by Lady Falkner's bed-ſide.

About eight o'clock, Lady Falkner drew aſide the curtain. "My deareſt Ethelinda, (cried ſhe,) don't diſtreſs yourſelf in this manner. Are you ſurpriſed, my love, to find me mortal? Be aſſured, I feel few regrets at believing that the moment is nearly arrived which proves me ſo. The leaving you unprotected is my chief concern; that thought embitters the awful moment beyond every other."

"Oh! (cried Ethelinda, ſinking on the bed,) do not, do not ſay you are going to leave me. O heaven! ſave, ſpare to me, in thy great mercy, my beloved, my adored benefactreſs!

benefactreſs! Let a poor orphan's prayers reach thy throne of mercy!"

Her voice faultered, aud ſhe ſunk on the bed by her beloved friend.

"Recover yourſelf, exert yourſelf, Ethelinda! (ſaid Lady Falkner;) I wiſh to ſpeak to you while I am able to do it."

"O madam! my heart will break; (cried the poor girl;) yet I will exert myſelf, indeed I will. Oh! that I could purchaſe your life with my own!"

"Talk not ſo, beloved child, (anſwered Lady Falkner.) I hope you have many happy years to come, and that your life will be a bleſſing to yourſelf and others. I have provided for you in ſuch a manner, as to ſecure your independence; yet I wiſh, in caſe I ſhould not recover, that you may be under the protection of Lady Cecilia. I truſt ſhe will be a ſincere friend to you, and make you happy, but I would not have you ſtay with her a moment longer than you

you are ſo. You will be able to live where you pleaſe, but, if you can be happy in that family, they will be your beſt protectors."

Ethelinda was burſting with grief. "Do not, do not talk ſo. Oh! if I have the misfortune of loſing you, my deareſt benefactreſs, I care not what becomes of me. When you are gone, the world will be a deſert to me;" and ſhe ſobbed ſo violently, that ſhe was unable to utter another word.

Lady Falkner was much more compoſed, though greatly affected at ſeeing the wretchedneſs of Ethelinda, who was a conſiderable time before ſhe recovered ſufficient compoſure to recollect herſelf.

Lady Falkner, who had been a good deal agitated, begged Ethelinda to compoſe herſelf, and inſiſted on her going to bed, bidding her ſend Mrs. Manſel. Ethelinda pretended to obey her, but only went into her own chamber to give vent to her feelings,

ings, resolving to return, and watch in silence by her beloved friend all night.

Towards morning, Lady Falkner called for something to drink, and said she found herself considerably better. Ethelinda, forgetting her intention of being there in secret, exclaimed with fervency, "Thanks! O thanks to heaven!" and fell on her knees to pour out her gratitude.

"My beloved girl, (said Lady Falkner, surprised at hearing her voice,) why are you there? I thought you were gone to bed."

"O no! (cried Ethelinda,) I could have had no rest; but are you really better?"

"Indeed I am, (answered Lady Falkner;) but, unless you go to bed, and promise me to endeavour to get some rest, I shall soon be worse again."

"I will go this moment, (replied Ethelinda,) only let me first kiss your dear hand."

Upon

Upon ſaying this, ſhe approached the bed-ſide, and had the happineſs of finding Lady Falkner much cooler, and leſs feveriſh. She kiſſed Ethelinda with the greateſt tenderneſs, and bade her, inaſmuch as ſhe wiſhed for her recovery, to take care of herſelf.

Ethelinda, elated with hope, went with ſome comfort to ſeek for that repoſe, which is too frequently denied to ſenſibility like her's. In the morning ſhe had the joy to find Lady Falkner ſtill better than when ſhe left her, and ſhe almoſt wiſhed ſhe had not ſent for the Corbets, leſt ſhe ſhould be prevented from attending ſo cloſely on Lady Falkner as ſhe was inclined to do. However, ſhe reſolved to baniſh all compliments that interfered with her duty and inclination in that point.

She was ſtanding at the window in Lady Falkner's room, about noon, when ſhe ſaw their carriage drive up. She had not mentioned to Lady Falkner the having ſent for them,

them, and was now rather uneaſy, leſt ſhe ſhould be diſpleaſed at it. It became, however, neceſſary to tell her of their arrival, which ſhe did, ſaying, that, in her fright the day before, ſhe had written to Lady Cecilia. Lady Falkner ſaid ſhe had done very well, though ſhe was now ſo much better, that ſhe believed all preſent danger was over.

Ethelinda went down to receive the Corbets. She found Lady Cecilia and her daughter, and learned that Sir James and Mr. Corbet had been ſome days abſent from home upon particular buſineſs, and were not expected to return for a week.

"But (exclaimed Lady Cecilia) if my ſiſter is in immediate danger, I will ſend for them."

"Thanks to heaven! (replied Ethelinda,) I have the happineſs to inform you that ſhe is conſiderably better, though we had yeſterday the greateſt cauſe for alarm."

"It

"It is very happy (ſaid Lady Cecilia) that ſhe is ſo much better. I was quite ſurpriſed at the receipt of your letter."

"So was I, (ſaid Miſs Corbet,) for how vaſtly well we left her."

"But if (cried Lady Cecilia) ſhe was ſo very bad, as I underſtand ſhe was yeſterday, I ſhould think ſo ſudden an alteration for the better cannot be depended upon.—What does the phyſician ſay?"

"Oh! that he has the greateſt hopes," replied Ethelinda.

"But thoſe people always deceive one," cried Miſs Corbet.

"Well, (ſaid Lady Cecilia,) I will go up and ſee her. Does ſhe know we are come, Miſs Claremont?"

"So will I too, (ſaid Miſs Corbet;) but may be it will be better not to go all together. Will you take a turn in the garden, Miſs Claremont, while my mother goes?"

"If you will ſtay (replied Ethelinda) till I inquire whether Lady Falkner wants me; and, in caſe I find ſhe does not, I will re-

turn immediately, and attend you into the garden for a quarter of an hour."

Lady Cecilia found Lady Falkner much better than in her heart ſhe wiſhed; that heart, of which covetouſneſs poſſeſſed ſo large a ſhare, was now dilated by the hope of being ſoon able to execute ſome of the ſchemes ſhe had, for a great while paſt, been planning. She had not long quitted Lady Falkner, and retired to her own apartment, before Mrs. Gregſon made her appearance. Lady Cecilia had wiſhed to ſee her; but, as over-caution is ever the companion of guilty minds, ſhe had been fearful of ſending for her, leſt it ſhould create ſuſpicions.

"O Mrs. Gregſon! (ſaid Lady Cecilia,) I am vaſtly glad to ſee you. Why, you have had a melancholy houſe here."

"I am exceſſively happy (anſwered Mrs. Gregſon) to ſee your ladyſhip. — Yes, indeed, a very melancholy houſe. My lady has been very dangerous, but ſhe is better."

"So I find, (replied Lady Cecilia;) but pray, who was it wiſhed for us? Miſs Claremont wrote, but I ſuppoſe ſhe was not anxious for our company.'

"I fancy it was the doctor, (replied Mrs. Gregſon;) but if I was your ladyſhip, I ſhould now try to get things ſet right."

"I ſhould be very glad to do that, (ſaid Lady Cecilia;) but how is it to be done?"

"Why, don't your ladyſhip think that my lady would liſten to reaſon?"

"O dear! (anſwered Lady Cecilia,) that is quite out of the queſtion. There is but one way that I know of, and, to be ſure, there are ſome objections to that, though, in reality, it would only be doing juſtice."

"Well then, I am ſure (replied the ſcrupulous Mrs. Gregſon) it ought to be done."

"I am glad, (returned Lady Cecilia,) that you ſee things in a right light Mrs. Gregſon. Your aſſiſtance may be neceſſary, and you may be aſſured I ſhall conſider your intereſt."

"Your ladyſhip is very good, I am ſure I ſhall be happy to do any thing to oblige you."

"Well,

"Well, ſaid Lady Cecilia, for the ſake of doing juſtice, we muſt not ſtand on fooliſh ſcruples.—We will have ſome further converſation on the ſubject another time."

"When Mrs. Gregſon had taken her leave, Lady Cecilia began to conſider what ſcheme was moſt likely to ſucceed. She wiſhed as little as poſſible to put herſelf in the power of Mrs. Gregſon, or of any one elſe; but, in the ſcheme which ſhe thought of, it ſeem'd abſolutely neceſſary for her to have an accomplice. After much conſideration ſhe determined to inſinuate to Mrs. Gregſon, that Lady Falkner wiſhed to make a new will; and, tho' Mrs. Gregſon might have her private doubts about it, ſtill ſhe could only doubt."

"Lady Falkner was at preſent certainly much better, yet Lady Cecilia ſaw reaſon to believe that the amendment would not be laſting. She wiſhed to get Ethelinda out of the houſe, ſeeing, as ſhe was ſo conſtant an attendant on Lady Falkner, it would be next

to impoſſible to put any ſchemes into practice while ſhe was in the way. To effect this therefore, was her firſt purpoſe, whenever an opportunity offered"

"Some days now paſt, in which Lady Falkner got ſo much better as to be able to ſet in her dreſſing-room; but Ethelinda, more ſincerely intereſted in her welfare than any other perſon, ſaw, with the deepeſt concern, a dreadful change in her looks and manner. She was, in conſequence of the diſorder, become fretful; her appetite was very indifferent, and her ſtrength much impaired: Poor Ethelinda's heart bled.—She ſaw, with great, tho' ſilent grief, that her beloved friend had received a ſtroke, from which it was not probable ſhe would recover. When alone, ſhe gave vent to her ſorrow and tears; but the diſguiſe ſhe was obliged to aſſume at other times oppreſſed and hurt her conſiderably. Lady Falkner obſerved to Lady Cecilia how ill Ethelinda look'd. Her ladyſhip readily coincided with her in opinion, and ſaid, "that ſhe thought change of air might be of eſſential ſervice to Miſs Claremont, and that, without

without ſomething of that ſort were tried in time, the conſequences might be fatal; as at her time of life a decline was much to be dreaded; and ſhe thought the beſt thing to be done was to ſend both the girls, (Miſs Corbet having a very diſagreeable cold and cough,) to Langley-Park for a fortnight."

Lady Falkner, though ſorry to part with Ethelinda, thought it ſo neceſſary, that ſhe determined to inſiſt upon her going, and, as ſoon as ſhe came into the room, told her of the plan. Ethelinda ſtrongly oppoſed it, but Lady Falkner, quite convinced of its propriety, inſiſted upon it, at the ſame time ſaying, "unleſs you have a mind to vex me extremely Ethelinda, you will not ſay another word againſt it, but will prepare to go on the day after to-morrow." Ethelinda, though much afflicted with the thought of leaving her, did not chuſe to vex Lady Falkner by making farther oppoſition.

On the night before ſhe was to ſet out, Mrs. Manſel came into Ethelinda's room,

and ſeeing her exceſſively oppreſſed, endeavoured to comfort her.

"Let me intreat you, Miſs Claremont, not to give way to ſo much uneaſineſs, I hope you will find our dear lady better at your return, and I hope I need not add that ſhe ſhall not want for any attention that I can pay her in your abſence; and you really have fretted yourſelf ſo ill, that I do not wonder my lady wiſhes you to try change of air."

"And do you think" ſaid Ethelinda, "that I ſhall be eaſier at ſuch a diſtance from my beloved friend?—No, believe me, I ſhall not have one moment's comfort while I am gone. She quite miſtakes in thinking I ſhall be better; however, as ſhe makes ſuch a point of it, I muſt go, leſt I ſhould give her uneaſineſs by my refuſal; but, pray ſend for me again very ſoon.—I ſhall write to the ſame purpoſe, and promiſe me faithfully, if you ſee the leaſt alteration for the worſe, to ſend for me immediately."

Mrs Manſell aſſured her ſhe would do ſo.

When

When the morning came, Ethelinda went to Lady Falkner, who took the moſt tender leave of her; and Ethelinda, with a very full heart, and with many intreaties that ſhe might be permitted to return ſoon, parted from her, and got immediately into the carriage, which ſoon conveyed her and Miſs Corbet to Langley-Park.

It was obſerved before that Sir James and Mr. Corbet were abſent on buſineſs, which was likely to detain them for ſome time; ſo that Ethelinda had no fears of meeting Mr. Corbet. We will for the preſent leave her, to attend to ſome tranſactions which will appear in the next chapter.

CHAP. XI.

In which thoſe, who love Juſtice, will be very juſtly offended.

LADY Cecilia being now left to herſelf, could carry on her plots, and execute them without fear of ſpies. Mrs. Manſel indeed ſtood a little in her way, but ſhe thought ſhe could eaſily contrive to elude her obſervations.

She had obſerved for ſome days that Lady Falkner had ſymptoms, which appeared to have an alarming tendency; but ſhe carefully concealed this, leſt ſhe ſhould not have been able to get Miſs Claremont out of the way. The

The ſecond day after ſhe was gone, Lady Falkner found her ſpirits uncommonly low. As ſhe was going to bed, ſhe told Mrs. Manſel "that ſhe thought ſhe had but a ſhort time to remain in this world.—I have, (continued ſhe,) only one circumſtance that hangs heavy on my mind,—which is, my dear Ethelinda's being left unprotected. I have taken care to provide for her, and I hope Lady Cecelia will be her friend and protectreſs; but Manſel, you muſt promiſe me to do every thing in your power, when I am gone, to ſerve that dear girl."

"My dear lady, (anſwered Mrs. Manſel.) you are low-ſpirited at preſent, but I truſt you have yet many years to live. I believe the abſence of Miſs Claremont affects you; do, let me ſend for her. She will, I know, be unhappy while ſhe is gone, and the being abſent from you will do her much more harm than the change of air can do her good."

"No, (ſaid Lady Falkner,) ſhe is certainly ill, and ſhe ſhall therefore try for a few days more the change of air, and then I will have her back again, for indeed ſhe is my comfort.

That I ſhould be anxious for her future ſafety cannot ſurpriſe you.—I am however, convinced that you will be as uſeful to her as you can; I think that, independently of that reſpect which, I believe, you would pay to my requeſt, you have yourſelf a great love and value for her."

"Indeed Madam, I have, (replied Mrs. Manſel,) but I truſt ſhe will never need the poor ſervices I could render her."

The next morning Lady Falkner, wiſhing to add a codicil to her will, ſent a ſervant to York for Mr. Grey, who, though he uſually lived at a great diſtance, happened to be on a viſit at York, where he was to make only a ſhort ſtay. He having been long known to Lady Falkner, and his character much reſpected by her, ſhe was glad of the opportunity of employing him in ſuch a buſineſs. The codicil was finiſhed juſt as Dr. Nelſon, who came to pay her a friendly viſit, had arrived, and ſhe deſired him to witneſs it, which he accordingly did. Mr. Grey ſoon took his leave, and the doctor continued chatting

with Lady Falkner, who prevailed on him to ſtay dinner. Lady Cecilia having a bad cold, had laid in bed longer than uſual, and did not mean to appear till near dinner time. Lady Falkner ſeemed in better ſpirits than ſhe had been for ſeveral days. She was lamenting to the Doctor the loſs of Ethelinda, and ſaying that ſhe felt quite uncomfortable without her, when ſhe ſuddenly put her hand up to her head, and fell back in her chair. Doctor Nelſon jumped up, and ran to her, and immediately perceived that ſhe was again ſeized with a violent paralytic fit. He inſtantly called for aſſiſtance, ſent for Lady Cecilia, and endeavoured to get ſomething down her throat, but ſaid he feared all attempts to relieve her would prove vain. From her pulſe, he thought ſhe might hold out four-and-twenty hours, but it ſeemed to him impoſſible that ſhe ſhould recover the ſeverity of the ſtroke. They conveyed her into her room, and, as ſoon as Mrs. Manſel had a little time for recollection, ſhe propoſed to Lady Cecilia to ſend for Miſs Claremont, but this was at preſent very far from her lady-

ſhip's intention. She determined to make uſe of this opportunity, probably the only one ſhe could have, to put her plots into execution:—and with this view ſent for Mrs. Gregſon.

Lady Cecilia had been for ſome time paſt prepared with a will, which ſhe had reſolved to ſubſtitute in the room of Lady Falkner's whenever a fair and happy occaſion offered for doing what ſhe deemed ſo reaſonable and proper an act of juſtice to herſelf and family. She had artfully inſinuated to Mrs. Gregſon, "that ſhe knew that Lady Falkner had changed her mind in regard to Ethelinda, and intended to make a new will." She now ſent for her, and, as ſoon as Mrs. Gregſon appeared, exclaimed.

"I am ſo much ſhock'd my good Mrs. Gregſon that I have ſcarcely my recollection."

After ſome general diſcourſe about the dangerous ſituation of Lady Falkner, and ſome mutual exclamations of what a ſad thing it was, Lady Cecilia added,

"Well,

"Well, Gregſon, my ſiſter, as I told you the other day was her intention, has made a new will, and has communicated to me its contents: She has thought it beſt to leave Miſs Claremont under my care, as ſhe knows my regard for her would make me do every thing by her the ſame as ſhe would do herſelf; and being ſenſible of your merit, ſhe has taken care to reward it very liberally."

Lady Cecilia had been ſomewhat puzzled about filling up the blanks which ſhe had left in her will. Her fears and prudence rather ſuggeſted that ſhe ſhould give Miſs Claremont two thouſand pounds; but, as ſhe had a ſtrong deſire to lower her, and to have the entire power over her, ſhe thought that too large a ſum, and determined to give her only five hundred. For this poor legacy ſhe could aſſign as a reaſon, that Lady Falkner's eyes had been opened, and that ſhe had changed her mind with regard to Ethelinda, and had, on deliberation, thought it better that ſhe ſhould depend on Lady Cecilia for future protection. She conſidered that this

diſpoſition would enable her to play what part ſhe liked by Ethelinda, and that ſhe ſhould appear to act with great kindneſs and generoſity by affording her protection and ſupport, and ſhould be apparently juſtified in getting rid of her whenever ſhe thought it convenient. She had little reaſon to fear detection, becauſe ſhe had provided handſomely for Mrs. Gregſon, who would therefore for her own ſake, keep to herſelf any ſuſpicions ſhe might have; and, as Lady Falkner had no relations but the Corbet family, who had any expectations from her, ſhe had nothing to apprehend from nice inveſtigation. She conſidered the friendleſs Ethelinda as unable, and too ignorant in ſuch matters, to attempt it. Having now ſettled in her mind what the will ſhould be, and prepared it accordingly, it remained for her to contrive to get it ſigned. She had practiſed her ſiſter's hand with ſome ſucceſs, but hoped, with a little of her own aſſiſtance if neceſſary, to get Lady Falkner to ſign it herſelf. The getting rid of Mrs. Manſel ſeemed an eſſential point, and ſhe conſidered ſome-

time

time, before ſhe hit upon a method; at laſt a very eligible one occured to her. She ſent for Mrs. Manſel, and after inquiring much after her dear ſiſter, and hearing that ſhe continued in a lethargic ſtate—

"I have been thinking, (cried Lady Cecilia,) that you were perfectly right about ſending for Miſs Claremont, but it will be proper, Mrs. Manſel, that you ſhould go for her. She muſt not be ſuffered to come by herſelf; as the melancholy occaſion of her return will, no doubt, greatly affect her, and makes it perfectly wrong for her to come alone."

Mrs. Manſel readily acquieſced to what her ladyſhip propoſed, but ſaid "ſhe did not know how to leave her dear lady."

"As for that, (replied Lady Cecilia,) you may be ſure we will pay her every attention; and if you gō off very early, you may let the horſes reſt for an hour, bring them one ſtage back again, and then take poſt-horſes the reſt of

of the way: by this means you will not be gone long."

Mrs. Manſel, anxious for the return of Miſs Claremont, agreed to what Lady Cecilia propoſed, and determined to ſet out by four o'clock.

When the morning came, Lady Cecilia found Lady Falkner in exactly the ſame ſtate; and Dr. Nelſon ſaid, that he did not expect ſhe would ever be any better, and that he ſaw no hopes whatever of her recovery; he muſt go to ſee another patient that morning, but would return as ſoon as he could.

Lady Cecilia felt no concern at his intended abſence. She had ſent the day before for Sir James and Mr. Corbet, but did not expect their arrival till the evening of the next day. She had reflected a great deal on the conſequences of the ſtep ſhe was about to take, and, repenting of the confidential converſations ſhe had had with Mrs. Gregſon, determined to have no more of them. She recollected

recollected that, as there was no occaſion to ſay any thing of the real eſtate, her family taking it of courſe if not otherwiſe diſpoſed of, witneſſes to the will were not neceſſary. She found, that by dilligent practice, ſhe was able to write her ſiſter's hand with great accuracy, and therefore came to the reſolution of ſigning the will herſelf, antidating it, and placing it in the room of the other. She would not however, venture to deſtroy the other till Lady Falkner was dead, leſt ſome unexpected turn in her diſorder ſhould take place, of which, in truth, there ſeemed not the ſmalleſt probability.

Lady Cecilia having thus reſolved, took Lady Falkner's keys from her pocket, and ſearched her eſcrutoire, where ſhe ſoon found the will, and, without farther ceremony, exchanged it for that of her own fabrication.

The eſcrutoire ſtood in the dreſſing-room which was adjoining to Lady Falkner's chamber; finding that the will was open, ſhe thought there could be no great crime in peruſing

ruſing it, and was juſt beginning to do ſo, when the door opened and Sir James entered. His ſudden and unexpected appearance ſurprized her very much; and terror, leſt he ſhould aſk her what the paper was, induced her haſtily to throw it into the fire. To ſtop him from advancing any farther, ſhe ran to him, exclaiming, "Bleſs me, Sir James, why I did not expect you till night, but I am glad you are come."

While ſhe was ſaying this, ſhe laid hold of his arm and drew him into an oppoſite room. The perturbation ſhe was in, he readily, but not rightly, accounted for. As they went out at one door, Mrs. Gregſon, unobſerved by Lady Cecilia, came into the dreſſing-room by another, and ſeeing a large paper on the fire, her curioſity naturally led her to ſee what it was, and, ſnatching it from the flames, ſhe plainly read in her lady's hand the words "My laſt Will and Teſtament."—As ſhe was at little loſs to gueſs how the affair ſtood, ſhe immediately thought, it might be worth her while to preſerve it, and that it would put

Lady

Lady Cecilia in her power, in caſe ſhe ſhould not find herſelf very ſufficiently rewarded by the promiſed legacy. Into her pocket therefore did this careful and truſty houſekeeper put all that remained of the paper, determining to examine, and try to make out, it's contents, at her leiſure. She was not a little piqued too at finding, while ſhe knew herſelf ſo truſt-worthy, that Lady Cecilia had ſtopt ſhort in the confidence, which ſhe had begun to place in her. While theſe upright proceedings were going on at Newton-Hall, Mrs. Manſel arrived at Langley-Park.

Ethelinda was not up; Mrs. Manſel, afraid of alarming her by appearing too ſuddenly, ſent up word that a perſon wiſhed to ſpeak to her. She aſked who it was, the maid told her ſhe did not know, but it was a lady. Ethelinda aroſe as faſt as ſhe could, and deſired that the ſtranger might be ſhewn up.—When Mrs. Manſel entered the room, her aſtoniſhment was very great,—her heart ſunk within her, and ſhe exclaimed, "Good heavens! what brings you here? how is my dear

dear Lady Falkner? but I ſee by your looks, I ſee ſhe is dead."

"No indeed, madam, ſhe is not, but—"

"But what? (cried Ethelinda,) tell me."

"Why ſhe is very ill, and I came according to my promiſe to fetch you home."—

"Oh! dear, dear, (cried Ethelinda,) burſting into tears, I never ſhall ſee my beloved friend alive any more."

"Compoſe yourſelf my dear Miſs Claremont, (ſaid Mrs. Manſel,) things may turn out better than we expect, but I think the ſooner you go, the better, yet the horſes muſt reſt."

"Oh! no, I will ſet off this moment, (anſwered Ethelinda,) we muſt take poſt-horſes at the village, and go as faſt as poſſible."

Mrs. Manſel did not oppoſe her wiſhes; and after having taken a haſty leave of Miſs Corbet, to whom Lady Cecilia had written, they ſet off as faſt as the horſes could carry them.

When they arrived, Ethelinda flew up into Lady Falkner's room, and found her in the

the ſame ſenſeleſs ſtate, which ſhe had been in ever ſince her laſt attack. Ethelinda threw herſelf on her knees by the bed-ſide, and bathed Lady Falkner's cold hand with her tears.—"Dear, beloved friend, (ſhe exclaimed, you are gone,—alas! you are gone from me for ever."—She could utter no more—and fell back in Mrs. Manſel's arms. She however ſoon recovered herſelf a little, and continued kneeling by the bed-ſide. She had been in that ſituation ſome time when Lady Cecilia came into the room with Dr. Nelſon. They were ſtanding round the bed, Ethelinda ſobbing with grief, her head bow'd down on Lady Falkner's hand, which ſhe was eagerly kiſſing, when on a ſudden Lady Falkner faintly exclaimed—"Where am I?" and opened her eyes. Dr. Nelſon immediately gave her a cordial draught, and Ethelinda ſeemed almoſt wild with joy. Lady Cecilia ſaid, "This is very extraordinary, don't you think ſo doctor?

"It is unexpected, I own, anſwered the doctor."

"And

"And do you think there is any chance of her recovering! (eagerly interrupted her ladyſhip.—"

"Oh! do give us that comfort, (cried Ethelinda.)"

Dr. Nelſon, who was a ſenſible and diſcerning man, calmly replied, (giving a look of contempt at Lady Cecilia,) and addreſſing himſelf to Ethelinda, "I ſhould be happy to afford you that comfort, my dear young lady, you really ſeem to ſtand in need of it, but I cannot do it without deceiving you."

At this inſtant, Lady Falkner in a weak voice called out—"Where is—where is—Ethelinda ran to the bed.

"Where is who, my deareſt madam."—

"Where is my Ethe, Ethe?—"

"Here I am, my beloved benefactreſs,—here is your poor orphan."

Lady Falkner, whoſe hand was in Ethelinda's, made a motion to draw her towards her, and as Ethelinda bent over her, ſhe faintly

faintly ſaid, "I am going my love, may heaven bleſs and protect you, and may you always be"——————

A ſudden convulſion then ſeized her,—She never ſpoke more: and in a few minutes arrived at that awful criſis, when only paſt virtue could avail her. Her ſoul took it's flight from her beloved girl's arms; for Ethelinda had thrown herſelf on the bed, and claſped her dying benefactreſs, in an agony of the moſt piercing grief. It was ſome time before ſhe could be parted from the remains of all that was dear to her, and, when ſhe was by force dragged away, ſhe appeared almoſt lifeleſs, and was entirely ſenſeleſs. Mrs Manſel, who was tenderly attached to Ethelinda, uſed every method to recover her, and afterwards to reconcile her to an event that was—irremediable. "'Tis that (cried ſhe,) 'tis the certainty that it is irremediable, that ſhe is gone for ever! It is the knowledge of that dreadful certainty that makes me wretched."

Mrs.

Mrs. Manſel finding it in vain at preſent to ſpeak comfort to her, thought it beſt to indulge her grief, and deſiſted from reaſoning with her till ſhe became more compoſed; Mrs. Manſel then made uſe of thoſe arguments, which, ſhe knew, would on a good mind have the beſt effect.

The next morning Lady Cecilia ſent to deſire Miſs Claremont to come into Lady Falkner's dreſſing-room, where ſtood the eſcrutoire which contained the will. Sir James Corbet, who with his ſon had ſearched for it, of courſe produced it as his ſiſter's. Miſs Claremont, though very unfit for ſuch a ſcene, attended Lady Cecilia's orders: When ſhe came into the room, Sir James told her he had juſt found the will, and wiſhed to read it in her preſence. She bowed, and ſob'd, but her heart was too full for her to ſpeak. The will began by appointing Sir James Executor and reſiduary legatee, 50ool. was given to Lady Cecilia, 15,000l. to Miſs Corbet, 20,000l. to Mr. Corbet, 150l. per ann. to Mrs. Manſel, and the ſame to Mrs. Gregſon, and 500l. to Miſs Claremont,

mont, with a ſtrong recommendation of her to Lady Cecilia, not doubting, as it was expreſſed, that ſhe would by her behaviour deſerve it. Every one preſent, and apparently no one more than Lady Cecilia, were ſtruck with aſtoniſhment. She exclaimed, "This is very wonderful!" Sir James from his heart ſaid, "What can this mean? I don't know how to believe it." Mr. Corbet was, in his mind, delighted, but equally aſtoniſhed. Poor Ethelinda was indeed thunderſtruck. Though her heart was not only void of every mean and ſelfiſh feeling, but even generous almoſt to a fault, yet it was impoſſible ſhe ſhould not be wounded by this unexpected ſtroke.

The firſt idea of her having by ſome means forfeited the favour of Lady Falkner ſtruck a dagger to her heart. She was for ſome time unable to ſpeak. "What I have done, (at laſt ſhe ſaid,) to have incurred the diſpleaſure of my dear benefactreſs I know not. It is true, I had no right to any thing of her's; but her con-

ſtant goodneſs to me had naturally led me to ſuppoſe ſhe would have left me a ſupport, had I not done ſomething to offend her,—and that thought muſt for ever make me miſerable."

"I hope, my dear Miſs Claremont, (anſwered Lady Cecilia,) you will not conſider yourſelf as wanting ſupport. Lady Falkner's kindneſs and attention to you is only transferred to me."

"I am greatly obliged to your ladyſhip, (replied Ethelinda,) but, deſtitute and friendleſs as I am, I ſhould be ſorry to be troubleſome to you."

She was now ſo overcome by different ſenſations, that, finding herſelf very ill, ſhe begged to withdraw to her own apartment.

She found Mrs. Manſel there. At the ſight of her ſhe burſt into a flood of tears, which, in ſome degree, gave eaſe to her poor oppreſſed heart. Mrs. Manſel, having gueſſed the occaſion of her being ſent for,

was

was not ſurpriſed at ſeeing her ſo much affected, but little did ſhe gueſs at the circumſtance which aggravated her feelings.

When Ethelinda cried out, "O Mrs. Manſel! my dear benefactreſs was angry with me," Mrs. Manſel could not underſtand her.

"Angry with you!" exclaimed ſhe.

"O yes, yes! ſhe muſt have been ſo!"

"What can induce you to think ſo? (ſaid Mrs. Manſel;) I am ſure ſhe was not."

Ethelinda then told her, and never was any perſon more amazed.

"After ſome conſideration, ſhe exclaimed, "It cannot be! The very night before ſhe was taken ill, you were her whole concern."

She then told Ethelinda what had paſſed between them. Ethelinda received the moſt heart-felt ſatisfaction at this information; and, when ſhe was a little recovered, and reflected on the converſation ſhe had

herſelf had with Lady Falkner a few days before her journey, and alſo on the circumſtance of her calling for her in her laſt moments, ſhe was much perplexed to account for the ſmallneſs of her legacy, but greatly relieved in her mind from the conviction that it was not owing to her having forfeited the eſteem of her beloved friend and benefactreſs.

After having conſidered every circumſtance, Mrs. Manſel ſaid, "Heaven forgive me if I am wrong, but I firmly believe there has been ſome foul play, and nothing will convince me to the contrary: however, as we have not the proof, we had better at preſent not ſeem to ſuſpect it. I truſt that a time will come, and circumſtances occur, which may unravel what is at preſent ſo myſterious. If dear good Mr. Hall were here, he would be able to examine into this dark affair."

"Ah! (cried Ethelinda,) dear good man! his preſence would indeed be a comfort to

me; but, alas! it is in vain for me to wiſh for it."

"It is ſo, (anſwered Mrs. Manſel;) and, cruel as it is to acquieſce in a villainy that is to me ſo apparent, our ſubmiſſion at preſent ſeems unavoidable."

Ethelinda, though by nature very unſuſpicious, had too much underſtanding not to ſee with a penetrating eye. At preſent, ſhe was not calm enough for reflection: her grief was ſo great for the loſs ſhe had ſuſtained in her friend, that it abſorbed every other idea. She was conſtantly in the chamber, watching her remains; and, when it was neceſſary to pay them the laſt rites, ſhe became almoſt frantic with deſpair. In conſequence, ſhe was extremely ill, and confined to her bed for ſeveral days.

Mrs. Manſel, who had nurſed her with unremitting diligence, after ſhe got better, aſked her what ſhe meant to do?

"What do you adviſe me to do?" (ſaid Ethelinda.) It is true, my dear Lady

Falkner, on the night before I went to Langley-Park, desired that I would put myself under the protection of Lady Cecilia. Her wishes, you know, were always laws to me; but I fear that Lady Cecilia is not deserving of so much confidence as my dear departed friend placed in her; yet I, at present, have no resource, and were I not to go with her, it would have, I fear, too much the appearance of my having indeed deserved to be discarded."

"I do not see any thing else you can do at present but go with her, (replied Mrs. Mansel:) and yet I cannot bear the thought of your living under the same roof with that artful, designing young man, her son."

"That (said Ethelinda) would certainly be a great objection; but he is immediately going abroad for a year, and, before that expires, I shall have time to consider what plan I had best adopt."

"You know (said Mrs. Mansel) my engagements to Mr. Fletcher. It is my intention

tention to fulfil them as ſoon as I can; but it muſt be ſome months firſt. You recollect that the farm he lives upon is about forty miles from Sir James Corbet's, and I need not tell you, my dear young lady, how happy I ſhall be to receive you when I am ſettled there; though it will not be in my power to offer you the luxuries of life, I hope I may be able to inſure you at leaſt the comforts of it; and, if you can condeſcend to live in a humble ſtile, your living with us will, believe me, add much to my happineſs."

Ethelinda took her round the neck, and ſobbed in her boſom. "No! (cried ſhe,) the fatherleſs and deſtitute are not forſaken. The Almighty Being, whoſe power creates, will in mercy ſupport, and on him will I place my confidence, where it can never fail. I will go with Lady Cecilia, (continued Ethelinda,) but my continuance with her will depend upon circumſtances, and will not, I believe, be of long duration. I muſt

learn to provide for myſelf. Why ſhould not I do ſo as well as thouſands of others?"

"Do not talk ſo, my dear young lady, (cried Mrs. Manſel:) while I have a ſhilling you ſhall ſhare it."

"That my heart moſt gratefully thanks you, I hope you will believe, (returned Ethelinda;) but how could I ever ſubmit to become a continued burden upon you? but that is a future conſideration. In the mean time, be aſſured I will always conſider your houſe as an aſylum to me in caſe of trouble, and it will give me great pleaſure to viſit it in proſperity."

Ethelinda wrote a long letter to Mr. Hall, telling him every thing that had happened, and requeſting his advice. She had ever been too generous to ſave a great deal out of the handſome allowance which ſhe received regularly from Lady Falkner. However, ſhe at preſent had by her nearly a hundred and fifty pounds, and her wardrobe was conſiderable.

She

She felt that ſhe was going to enter upon a way of life very different from that to which ſhe had been accuſtomed. From a ſituation next to independence, ſhe had conſidered herſelf as Lady Cecilia's humble companion. She was to accommodate herſelf to a variety of tempers; and, inſtead of that warm partiality and affection with which ſhe had hitherto been treated, ſhe muſt expect to meet with the malignity of envy, and perhaps hatred. But ſhe had no reſource; and wiſdom and piety taught her humble ſubmiſſion to her fate.

The day was fixed for quitting Newton-Hall. Miſs Claremont had diſcharged her maid, very properly conſidering, that, in her circumſtances, it would ill become her to carry one to Lady Cecilia's. She had aſked leave to take the little dog Belle, which had belonged to Lady Falkner, and been her great favourite.

The evening before they were to ſet out, Ethelinda took a ſolitary walk round the

park and gardens, to bid them an eternal adieu. She ſtopped in many places, which had been her favourite ſpots. She went into the grotto, the whole of which had been planned, and parts of the ſhell-work formed by Lady Falkner. The Gothic windows were ſo ſhaded by ivy and other foliage, that a gloomy light only appeared. It ſeemed ſacred to contemplation, and calculated to inſpire the moſt ſerious reflections. She caſt her eyes on a chair, and ſaw a ſilk handkerchief hanging on the back of it, which ſhe recollected to have been worn by Lady Falkner on the laſt evening ſhe had been there.

Ethelinda flew towards it, and, taking it up, kiſſed it in an agony of grief, and put it into her boſom. A book laid open on the table, with the page marked at the following words, "Let the children of af-
"fliction find comfort in the certainty that
"their trials are but of ſhort duration;
"and, if they ſeek for the ſhield of virtue,
"though at firſt it may over-ſhadow, it will
"at

"at laſt diſcover them ſurrounded by a "dazzling light."

Ethelinda fell on her knees, and poured forth her ſoul to the throne of mercy, in the moſt pious petitions for protection and ſupport. Her heart felt relieved; and, putting the book into her pocket, ſhe haſtened out of the grotto.

She came next to the temple and the menagerie, where ſhe had ſpent ſo many happy hours. A gloom ſeemed to over-ſpread them. An unuſual calm prevailed: not a leaf moved. The ſilence appeared uncommon and awful. Her boſom alone felt emotion. As ſhe looked round her, ſhe burſt into tears. "Adieu! (cried ſhe,) farewell for ever! dear and beloved abode. Never can I hope to ſee thee more!—But ſhall ſuch a poor weak ſhort-ſighted creature as I am dare to murmur? No! I will moſt humbly ſubmit, as I ought, to what doubtleſs muſt be right;" and, drying her poor eyes, that, notwithſtanding all her efforts, ached

with crying, ſhe turned away, and haſtened in doors.

She ſpent as much of the evening as ſhe could with Mrs. Manſel, and the next morning was not a little affected when ſhe took leave of her, and the reſt of the ſervants, who all came with full hearts to aſſure her of their earneſt wiſhes for her future welfare. She by chance met Mrs. Gregſon, who ſeemed deſirous of avoiding her, and, when Ethelinda ſtopped to wiſh her health and happineſs, ſhe was evidently confuſed, and it was with a good deal of heſitation that ſhe in return wiſhed her the ſame.

It was early in the morning when ſhe ſet off with Lady Ceçilia. Sir James and Mr. Corbet were to ſtay two or three days longer, having buſineſs to ſettle with the ſteward.

No words can deſcribe what Ethelinda felt when they drove from the houſe. On a riſing ground, at the end of the park, ſhe gave a parting look at the beloved place.

Thoughts

Thoughts of her dear departed friend now ruſhed into her mind, and the reflection on the loſs ſhe had ſuſtained gave her ſuch poignant feelings, that ſhe turned giddy, and almoſt fainted away. Lady Cecilia not feeling much diſpoſed to ſooth her ſorrow, ſaid, "Indeed, Miſs Claremont, you give way a great deal too much to regrets, which, I think, you ſhould exert yourſelf to conquer."

"O madam! (cried the poor girl,) forgive me; indeed I cannot help it: my heart is ready to break."

"Well, you muſt do as you pleaſe," returned Lady Cecilia.

The tears that now forced their way afforded Ethelinda great relief, and her endeavours to compoſe herſelf ſucceeded ſo well, that ſhe became tolerably calm.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

In which there is more to diſguſt than to pleaſe.

WHEN they arrived at Langley-Park, Miſs Corbet received them in high ſpirits; for, though ſhe was not much pleaſed with having our heroine live there, ſhe was delighted at her fall, and would have been ſorry not to have had the opportunity of witneſſing the mortification ſhe muſt feel in her preſent dependent circumſtances.

Sir James and Mr. Corbet returned in a few days. Ethelinda's ſmall legacy was, at her requeſt, paid into the hands of Mr. Hales,

Hales, a worthy man, who had been uſed to tranſact money-matters for Lady Falkner, and who was to employ it to the beſt advantage.

Lady Cecilia told Ethelinda, that, when ſhe wanted money, ſhe might aſk for it; but Ethelinda's feelings not well according with that idea, ſhe reſolved not to make the requiſition while ſhe had a ſhilling left, and that ſhe would keep an exact account of any money which ſhe might afterwards receive from Lady Cecilia, in hopes it might one day be in her power to repay it, as ſhe did not wiſh to remain under an obligation to one whom ſhe could neither love nor reſpect.

Nothing material happened for ſome weeks, but our poor heroine every day experienced the dreadful change in her ſituation. Lady Cecilia had little delicacy, and made her feel her dependence almoſt every hour. Miſs Corbet was tolerably civil to her; nothing had occurred to make her otherwiſe. No

opportunity of rivalſhip had yet offered, for there had been no object there to occaſion any, and Mr. Corbet had been abſent on buſineſs, and was only juſt returned.

A different ſcene was now approaching. A great deal of company was expected. Mr. and Mrs. Morgan, Lord John Derry, and Mr. Webſter, were already arrived. Lord John had a good perſon, and, being the ſon of a duke, was of courſe a man of faſhion. Diveſted of theſe advantages, he had few others to boaſt of; he was haughty, vain, and frivolous. As he valued himſelf highly on his own rank, no wonder that he ſhould eſtimate others by the ſame criterion. Thoſe, therefore, who had no claim to hereditary honour, received none from him. To ſuch he was inattentive, and careleſs in his manners, and as rude in his civilities, as that formal good-breeding, which he ſuppoſed to be the neceſſary appendage to a man of faſhion, would permit.

Mr.

Mr Webſter, a diſtant relation of Lady Cecilia, was a young man born to a good fortune; but, from the over-fondneſs of an ill-judging mother, had been allowed to indulge himſelf in every expence, till his extravagancies had brought diſtreſs upon himſelf, and had greatly embarraſſed her. He played deep, and entered into all the modiſh vices, more from the folly of being thought faſhionable than from ſtrong paſſions.

Miſs Lyttleton had been ſome time expected, and now arrived. She was a ward of Sir James's, and was to be of age in a few months. As her fortune was very large, Lady Cecilia wiſhed to bring about a marriage between her and Mr. Corbet, and therefore treated her with a great deal of attention.

This young lady, in her diſpoſition, had a mixture of good-nature and caprice. She would do very kind things when they did not interfere with her humour; but ſhe

ſo

ſo much delighted in what ſhe called *fun*, that ſhe ſeldom let ſlip an opportunity of indulging herſelf in it; never, when it was to teaze thoſe ſhe diſliked, and too frequently even her greateſt favourites did not eſcape her; not that, in general, ſhe intended to make the objects of her raillery really uneaſy, but if they were ſo in conſequence of it, it was unlucky for them to have ſo much ſenſibility; ſhe had too little reflection to conſider conſequences.

Lady Cecilia had determined that her great kindneſs to Ethelinda ſhould now appear in glaring colours, in order that ſhe might hereafter ſtand clear of any imputation on her account, and was, therefore, when ſhe could command her uncertain humour, and check her deeply-rooted diſlike of her, prodigiouſly civil; but, at times, in ſpite of all her art and diſſimulation, her real feelings would break out.

She had conſidered of many plans for getting rid of her. As to letting Miſs Claremont

Claremont ſtay in the houſe for any length of time, it was the thing of all others ſhe was reſolved not to do. To lower her was the ſupreme wiſh of Lady Cecilia's heart; but there was ſome difficulty in bringing this about. She hoped that, by making her thoroughly uncomfortable in her preſent ſituation, it was probable ſhe would be very glad to change it. She knew that Ethelinda had no reſources, and that five hundred pounds could not ſupport her, and therefore thought ſhe might be brought to liſten to propoſals, which would inſure her a tolerable maintenance.

There was in the neighbourhood a gentleman-farmer of the name of Jennings. He had an eſtate of about three hundred a year, and was a kind of buck in his way. He hunted, drank hard, was not ill-looking, but ill-educated and ill-bred. Lady Cecilia, thinking Ethelinda might be induced to accept of this man, determined, if poſſible, to bring that about as ſoon as in decency ſhe could.

In

In the mean time, Mr. Corbet was conſidering how he could beſt put his deſigns in execution. Ethelinda avoided him as much as poſſible, and was terribly chagrined at finding that he had poſtponed his talked-of, but never-intended, tour. Whenever he, by chance, was a moment alone with her, the freedom he aſſumed alarmed her.

It was now the middle of Auguſt, and the weather being very hot, Ethelinda would frequently ſit, when ſhe thought Mr. Corbet was from home, in a ſmall wood, at a little diſtance from the houſe. The ſituation was beautiful, and the ſeat, which had the name of Ivy-Bower, was cloſe to a fine river, which ran through the ground. On the ſide oppoſite was a lawn, covered with cattle, and riſing hills beyond it. To carry her book or harp to this retreat was her greateſt delight.

One morning ſhe was returning from this place, juſt as Mr. Corbet came home from riding. Seeing her, he jumped from his horſe,

horſe, and, ſeizing hold of her hand, exclaimed, "Where have you been, lovely Ethelinda?"

"Taking a ſhort walk, ſir."

"It is ſo fine, you had better prolong it, (replied he;) and I wiſh to have ſome ſerious converſation with you."

"Indeed, ſir, (cried Ethelinda, diſengaging her hand,) you muſt excuſe me; I am in haſte, have letters to write, and muſt go in directly."

"I am ſure now that is very ill-natured, (exclaimed, with a loud laugh, Miſs Lyttleton, coming from behind ſome trees that had hid her from their ſight.) Do, Miſs Claremont, oblige Mr. Corbet, and liſten to his ſerious converſation."

"Mr. Corbet (returned Ethelinda) muſt have been in jeſt, when he talked of ſerious converſation with me."

"What do you ſay to this, Mr. Corbet? (cried Miſs Lyttleton.) Are your ſerious converſations jeſts? If ſo, perhaps your jeſts are ſerious, and then I ſhall never know how to underſtand you."

"Oh!

"Oh! (returned Mr. Corbet, heartily vexed at the interruption,) my converſation is generally ſerious, eſpecially when I am talking to the ladies."

"You were poſſibly then (ſaid Miſs Lyttleton) going to preach a ſermon to Miſs Claremont. Bleſs me! I wiſh I had heard it; but, come, let us at leaſt have the text."

"You will excuſe my ſtaying to hear it," cried Ethelinda, and walked away as faſt as ſhe could.

"That is a ſweet girl," ſaid Miſs Lyttleton.

"Tolerable," returned Mr. Corbet.

"I am ſure (replied ſhe) you are intolerable for your duplicity. Why, do you imagine that affected ſang-froid conceals from my penetration your real ſentiments."

"I have no deſire (ſaid Mr. Corbet) to conceal my real ſentiments. She is tolerably handſome, no doubt, but ſo deviliſh ſuſpicious that every man who ſpeaks to her is in love with her, that it is quite ridiculous."

"I

"I think ſhe is very much in the right, (anſwered Miſs Lyttleton,) to be particularly guarded and ſuſpicious, when ſhe ſees love and duplicity united."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Mr. Corbet.

"Mean! (cried Miſs Lyttleton,) I ſeldom mean any thing but to amuſe myſelf, and juſt now I find that difficult, ſo good morning to you;" and away ran the flighty girl into the houſe.

Mr. Corbet ſauntered another way, ruminating on this ſpecimen of Miſs Lyttleton's penetration, which he by no means reliſhed.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

In which bad Deſigns are hid under the Maſk of good ones, Hatred under the Appearance of Regard, and an unpleaſant Accident introduces a very pleaſant Perſonage.

THE next morning Lady Cecilia ſaid ſhe had ſome buſineſs at the village, and aſked Ethelinda to accompany her there. As they were paſſing by a good-looking houſe, her ladyſhip exclaimed, "Bleſs me! I will aſk Mr. Jennings how he does," obſerving at the ſame time that he was a very good ſort of a young man, and had a very pretty fortune.

When ſhe ſtopped the carriage, Mr. Jennings came out, and received her ladyſhip with

with great reſpect, and begged ſhe would honour him ſo far as to walk in. "Oh! certainly," ſhe replied, and inquired how his aunt did.

"O my lady! ſhe continues as hearty as ever. Nothing, as I often tell her, ever kills old women."

"But I have brought a young one to ſee you," ſaid Lady Cecilia, at the ſame time preſenting him to Ethelinda.

Mr. Jennings rubbed his hands, looked very hard at the young lady, but did not know what to ſay.

"You have not been at the Park for an age," cried Lady Cecilia.

"I thought you'd other company, my lady, and I am not one that likes to make one too many. But I haven't ſeen the young ſquire I don't know when. He uſed to call often; but, perhaps, (continued he, laughing and looking at Ethelinda,) he is better engaged at home."

"Oh! (ſaid Lady Cecilia,) the company at home don't prevent his going out, and calling upon his friends; but you muſt come to us. What ſay you to dining with us next Sunday?"

Mr. Jennings readily aſſented, and ſhe then took her leave.

When they were ſeated in the carriage, "Well, Miſs Claremont, (cried Lady Cecilia,) what do you think of our neighbour, Mr. Jennings?"

"Indeed, madam, (anſwered Ethelinda,) I have not ſeen enough of him to form any opinion."

"You have not ſeen much of him, to be ſure, (replied Lady Cecilia;) but how do you like what you have ſeen of him?"

"I can neither like nor diſlike him, (ſaid Ethelinda,) but he ſeems very well for the ſort of man he is."

"The ſort of man! (returned Lady Cecilia;) I can aſſure he is a very good ſort of man."

"Is

"Is he?" ſlightly anſwered Ethelinda.

They were then interrupted by Lord John and Mr. Webſter, who, riding up to the chaiſe, cried out in the ſame breath, "Where is your ladyſhip going? Can we be of any uſe as eſcortes?"

"No, no! (anſwered Lady Cecilia,) we will not take you out of your way. We are going back again preſently."

Ethelinda found that Lady Cecilia had no real buſineſs in the village, and, as it was by no means uſual for her to take morning-airings, ſhe was at a loſs to account for the reaſon of ſo uſeleſs an excurſion. She had not the leaſt gueſs at the true motive, and did not give herſelf much trouble to inveſtigate it.

On Sunday Mr. Jennings made his appearance. He had been not a little ſupriſed by Lady Cecilia's unuſual condeſcenſion;

for, though ſhe had reaſon for paying ſome attention to the neighbouring freeholders, ſhe could not ſufficiently get the better of her ſupercilious haughty manner, to make thoſe attentions ſit eaſy on herſelf, or render thoſe eaſy whom ſhe honoured with them.

When Mr. Jennings was firſt uſhered into the room, he ſeemed ſomewhat awed at ſeeing ſo large a party; but, being naturally bold and forward, he ſoon ſhook off his embarraſſment. In this too he was much aſſiſted by Lady Cecilia's marked attention to him; and it was not long before he began to talk both faſt and loud, affected a degree of wit, and finiſhed his ſentences with winking and nodding to ſome one of the company.

Lady Cecilia eaſily contrived to place Mr. Jennings next to Ethelinda, who uſually ſat at the lower end of the table. At firſt he only gave her ſome ſly looks, but very ſoon got more familiar. To encourage this familiarity, Lady Cecilia called out to him

him to perſuade Miſs Claremont to drink a glaſs of wine, ſaying, "I don't think you take care of her."

"Why, indeed, my lady, (ſaid he,) Miſs ſeems to want ſome care, for ſhe ſcarcely eats a bit; (then, turning to Ethelinda,) but I hope, Miſs, you will drink, if you won't eat. What wine do you chooſe?"

"I do not chooſe any," anſwered Ethelinda.

"Come, come, (replied he,) I muſt not be ſerved ſo. We muſt obey the higher powers. Didn't you hear her ladyſhip?"

"Ah! come Miſs Claremont, (ſaid Lady Cecilia,) don't be ſo cruel to Mr. Jennings. Pray drink a glaſs of wine with him."

"At your deſire I certainly will, madam," returned Ethelinda.

The wine was accordingly brought, and, in taking it, the clumſy ſquire threw a glaſs of it over her. He made a thouſand vulgar ſpeeches on the occaſion, and concluded them with believing the devil was in him.

This accident, however, lowered his ſpirits for the remaining part of the dinner-time, which was chiefly ſpent by him in wondering how it happened. When the ladies retired, Mr. Jennings ſoon recovered himſelf, and ſtaid as long as Sir James ſeemed willing to have his company.

A few mornings after this, Lady Cecilia told Ethelinda that ſhe wiſhed her to go about four miles off to inquire the character of a ſervant. She might have the poſt-chaiſe, but deſired ſhe would not be gone longer than was neceſſary. Ethelinda had now been ſo much uſed to be treated in this ſort of haughty manner, that ſhe was no longer ſurprized at it, and had in her own mind reſolved not to ſtay longer at Langley-Park, than till ſhe ſhould be able to form ſome plan for her future maintenance, and in this ſhe ſtood greatly in need of advice. Her valued friend, Mr. Hall, ſhe determined to conſult, and to be guided by his opinion, but it muſt be ſome length of time before ſhe could receive it. She, however, reſolved

reſolved to wait for it, and then to act accordingly. She had received ſeveral letters from him, but none ſince the death of Lady Falkner, which gave her great uneaſineſs.

Mrs. Manſel was to be married very ſhortly, and ſhe was ſecure of any protection which it was in her or her huſband's power to give; but, as ſhe was unwilling to be an incumbrance upon them, ſhe determined, till her plans were fixed, to bear, with as little mortification as poſſible, the ſlights ſhe was continually ſubject to.

Having received Lady Cecilia's directions, ſhe prepared to obey them. When the chaiſe was ready, ſhe ſat off in it without any ſervant to attend her, and was ſoon alarmed at the horſes ſeeming to be very ſpirited and ungovernable. The horſes were young, and had not yet been ſufficiently uſed to the harneſs. She obſerved that the poſtillion had great difficulty in managing them.

A ſigh eſcaped from her breaſt when ſhe reflected how times were changed with her, and ſhe whiſpered to herſelf, "Ah! my beloved benefactreſs, how would you, whoſe fears for me were always alive, have ſuffered by ſeeing me in this ſituation! Now no one cares what becomes of me."

This apoſtrophe was ſcarcely concluded, when they were going over a bridge, juſt as a load of gravel was ſhooting out of a cart, which frightened the horſes ſo violently, that the poſtillion loſt all command over them, and they run with ſuch fury againſt the corner of the bridge, that one of the wheels was torn off, and the carriage overſet.

The horſes now run faſter, and dragged it a conſiderable way before any one dared to ſtop them. At laſt a turnpike-man, ſeeing the accident at ſome diſtance, ſhutting the gate, they found themſelves under the neceſſity of ſtopping when they came to it.

Several

Several people ſoon came up. Among them, a gentleman in a poſt-chaiſe, who, ſeeing a croud, ſtopped to inquire what was the matter; and, when he was informed that a chaiſe was almoſt torn to pieces with a lady in it, whom they ſuppoſed dead, he immediately jumped out of his carriage, to ſee what uſe he could be of.

When he advanced to the fragments of the chaiſe, he indeed ſaw a female figure, but ſo covered with blood, that not a feature could be diſtinguiſhed, and ſhe was to all appearance dead. He, however, ordered her to be carried into a cottage that was cloſe by; and, finding there was not any perſon near who ſeemed capable of giving proper directions, he thought it neceſſary to do ſo himſelf.

He had ſuch methods uſed as he thought would be efficacious, and, to his great ſatisfaction, ſhe ſoon gave ſigns of life, and ſoon after opened her eyes. Her ſenſes,

however, were quite confuſed, but by degrees ſhe regained them.

"Where am I? (exclaimed ſhe;) Oh! where am I?—Pray tell me what is the matter?"

"Compoſe yourſelf, madam, (replied the humane ſtranger.) A dreadful accident has happened, which a few minutes ago we had reaſon to fear would have been of the moſt fatal conſequence to you."

By this time an apothecary, who lived near, had arrived; and, with the aſſiſtance of a cordial, our poor heroine was ſoon ſo far recovered, as to have ſome degree of recollection, but was ſo much hurt, and complained of ſo violent a pain in her ſide, that the apothecary thought it was neceſſary for her to be immediately blooded and put to bed; and ſaid that ſhe muſt not on any account be removed.

The

She begged to be carried home, but, ſeeming again ready to faint, ſhe could make no reſiſtance, and was conveyed to bed.

The ſtranger then inquired of the people, who were about the broken carriage, from whence it came, and who the lady was?

When he found from whence ſhe came, he teſtified great ſurpriſe, and ſaid it was the houſe he was going to. He determined to loſe no time in acquainting her friends of the unfortunate accident; and, having given ſtrict charge to the woman ſhe was with to be careful of her, he went as faſt as his horſes could convey him to Langley-Park.

When he arrived, he found the family juſt going to dinner. Impatient to relate the unhappy accident, and break it in the gentleſt manner, he followed the ſervant

immediately into the room, where the whole party were aſſembled.

"Bleſs me! (cried Lady Cecilia,) Lord Beaufort!"

"Heavens! (exclaimed Miſs Corbet, with evident emotion,) well, I did not expect,—yet I did expect"—and there ſhe ſtopped.

"I am afraid (ſaid Lord Beaufort, bowing to the party) I ſhall not be welcome.—I grieve that I muſt be an unwelcome viſitor."

"An unwelcome viſitor! (repeated Lady Cecilia;) what does your lordſhip mean?"

"That is impoſſible," cried Sir James, and then every one haſtily advanced towards him.

"You do not, I ſee, (ſaid Lord Beaufort,) know of the accident that has happened, but I hope it will not prove of any very great conſequence."

They

They all cried out, "What accident?"

"Why, (replied he, looking round, as if fearful of alarming them,) a young lady, who, I am told, came from this houſe, has been overturned."

"Surely, (cried Lady Cecilia,) and pray where is ſhe?—What! is the chaiſe broke too?"

"Bleſs me! (exclaimed Miſs Lyttleton,) poor Miſs Claremont, I hope ſhe is not hurt."

"I hope not very eſſentially, (returned Lord Beaufort,) but hurt ſhe moſt certainly is."

"And how came you to meet with her?" cried Miſs Corbet?"

"I flatter myſelf, (returned Lord Beaufort,) that it was fortunate I did ſo. I hope I was of ſome uſe." He then related the particulars.

"Bleſs

"Bleſs me! (exclaimed Mrs. Morgan,) how luckly it was that you, my dear Miſs Corbet, did not go with thoſe friſky horſes! You and Miſs Lyttleton really had half a mind to have gone: how lucky that you did not! and that Lady Cecilia only ſent Miſs Claremont."

"I think it was very unlucky that any body went with ſuch vicious devils, (ſaid Mr. Morgan;) they were not fit to uſe till they had been better broke in."

"But (cried Mr. Corbet) where is Miſs Claremont? She ſhould have immediate aſſiſtance."

"There has been an apothecary with her, you hear, (ſaid Lady Cecilia;) but I will go after dinner myſelf."

"After dinner, ma'am, (exclaimed Mr. Corbet;) that is loſing time. Do at leaſt ſend your apothecary directly, and ſome of the maid-ſervants."

"Permit

"Permit me to go, ma'am, (cried Miſs Lyttleton.) I declare I am quite grieved. How ſhocking it will be if poor Miſs Claremont ſhould be dangerouſly hurt!"

"But why, Miſs Lyttleton, ſhould you ſuppoſe that ſhe is ſo? (cried Miſs Corbet.) Lord Beaufort does not ſeem to apprehend any ſuch thing"

"Indeed, (replied Lord Beaufort,) I am very apprehenſive ſhe is greatly hurt, but was fearful of communicating my opinion too abruptly."

"I hope not, (cried Miſs Lyttleton,) from my ſoul, for ſhe is the loveliеſt girl in the world."

"But I think (ſaid Miſs Corbet) it is now more to the purpoſe to do what is neceſſary, than to enter into diſcuſſions."

"I do not enter into them from indifference, but to expreſs what I feel," retorted Miſs Lyttleton with a ſneer.

"Well, (cried Mr. Corbet, who was really greatly ſhocked,) I will go for aſſiſtance myſelf."

"It is highly neceſſary that the beſt ſhould be had, and without loſs of time," replied Lord Beaufort."

Upon this, Lady Cecilia, who began to be a little aſhamed of the indifference ſhe had ſhewn, pretended now to be very eager, and went out of the room to give neceſſary directions.

She ſoon returned, ſaying ſhe had ſent to order the ſurgeon and apothecary, in whoſe ſkill ſhe had great confidence, to go immediately to Miſs Claremont, and to ſtay with her; and, as ſoon as the carriage was ready, which would be by the time dinner was over, ſhe would go to her.

Lord Beaufort's curioſity was very great to know who this Miſs Claremont was, that ſeemed to have ſo little intereſt in the family.

mily. He had not been able to diſcern any thing of her perſon. Her clothes were torn, and in great diſorder; her hair half over her face, which was covered with blood and dirt, and it was impoſſible to trace any of that beauty and grace which was in general ſo apparent.

Lady Cecilia and Miſs Lyttleton, who inſiſted upon accompanying her, went as ſoon as dinner was over, and found poor Ethelinda very much hurt, but the ſurgeon ſaid he beleived not dangerouſly; at the ſame time declaring that ſhe was not in a ſituation to be removed, but he hoped would be ſo in a few days.

Lady Cecilia left a houſe-maid to attend her, and Miſs Lyttleton much wiſhed that her maid might aſſiſt; but Lady Cecilia ſaid there was no occaſion, and would not ſuffer it.

In the mean time, Lord Beaufort, in the abſence of Miſs Corbet, inquired of Mrs. Morgan who this Miſs Claremont was.

" Only

"Only a kind of companion to Lady Cecilia, whom her ladyſhip is very good to."

"Miſs Lyttleton ſays ſhe is very handſome," replied Lord Beaufort.

"That is as people think, my lord, (anſwered Mrs. Morgan;) for my part, I ſee nothing in her. She has been made to think herſelf a perfect beauty, but I dare ſay your lordſhip will not think her ſo.—But you did ſee her I ſuppoſe, and pray what do you think?"

"Indeed I did not ſee her. She was conveyed, as ſoon as ſhe began to recover, into a bed-chamber, and was too much diſfigured by the dreadful accident to attract any notice but that of compaſſion."

"Well, I am ſure your lordſhip was very good to pay her ſo much attention."

"I cannot, madam, (returned Lord Beaufort, ſmiling,) find any reaſon to compliment myſelf upon the occaſion."

The

The converſation was then interrupted. Miſs Corbet entered the room. She was delighted with Lord Beaufort's viſit. He was the man whom ſhe preferred to all others.—He was indeed worthy of a preference; and the world, which is not always the caſe, was in this inſtance juſt. He was looked up to by every one who knew him.

High in birth and fortune, in reputation and honour, and highly ſuperior in perſon and accompliſhments, he was reſpected, honoured, courted, and careſſed. His ſentiments and opinions generally deſerved the diſtinction they met with; but faſhion carried it ſometimes almoſt to an abſurdity, and from ſome people he was liable to a moſt diſguſting ſubſerviency.

Miſs Corbet hardly dared to flatter herſelf that ſhe had created any tender ſentiments in his heart. Yet ſhe hoped,—ſhe thought, he had certainly paid her attentions. His preſent viſit alſo elated her;—

that

that is, it elated her one moment, and alarmed her the next.

Miſs Claremont's ſuperior charms croſſed her imagination, and in an inſtant raiſed again that paſſion, ſo deſtructive, but ſo analagous to human nature, and which at preſent only laid dormant in her breaſt, for want of a proper opportunity to exert it.

We are inclined to doubt if ſhe might not have borne with tolerable compoſure the news of Ethelinda's being mortally hurt. She would probably have been aſhamed, even to herſelf, of ſuch indifference, and have endeavoured to believe, and to cheat others into a belief, that ſhe was greatly ſhocked and affected; but we, who have the privilege of knowing what really paſſed in her heart, ſaw that the apprehenſions of a rival over-balanced every other feeling.

When the ladies returned, Lord Beaufort eagerly inquired after Ethelinda.

"Oh!

"Oh! ſhe will ſoon be well, I dare ſay, (ſaid Lady Cecilia,) but I find the chaiſe is broken to all pieces."

"Dear madam, (cried Miſs Lyttleton,) what ſignifies the chaiſe, ſo long as the ſweet girl is not materially hurt."

"Why, I think it would be as well, if it had not been broken, (anſwered Lady Cecilia,) it was new the other day."

"And the moſt elegant one I ever ſaw, (cried Mrs. Morgan;) I don't wonder at Lady Cecilia's being vexed about it. Did not your lordſhip obſerve it?"

"Indeed, madam, I was too anxious to aſſiſt the lady who unfortunately happened to be within, to regard the outſide of it."

"And it will (cried Miſs Lyttleton) be well if your lordſhip don't ſuffer for your humanity."

"I can never ſuffer, however, in a better cauſe," anſwered Lord Beaufort.

"Why, that is true in one ſenſe too, (replied Miſs Lyttleton,) and it will be ungrateful in her to return evil for good."

"What

"What evil (cried Mrs. Morgan) has Lord Beaufort to fear?"

"Only the evil that I think every man has to fear who ſees and converſes with Miſs Claremont."

"It is a pity (Miſs Lyttleton) that you are not a man for Miſs Claremont's ſake, (exclaimed Miſs Corbet;) you would certainly run away with her."

"Oh! (returned Miſs Lyttleton) I ſhould not be half good enough, unleſs I were a great deal better than I am."

"Dear me, you are in a very humble humour juſt now."

"Not I, indeed; and my ſaying that Miſs Claremont is much better than me is no proof of it, for I poſitively think I never ſaw ſo ſweet a creature as ſhe is in my life, and it is kind in me to be the alarm-bell to warn my couſin of his approaching danger."

Juſt then Mr. Corbet opened the door. "And here comes one (continued Miſs Lyttleton,) who is, I believe, entirely of my opinion."

"What

"What is that?" ſaid Mr. Corbet.

"Why, don't you think (returned Miſs Lyttleton) that Miſs Claremont is the ſweeteſt creature in the world?"

Mr. Corbet was a little unprepared for ſuch an attack, and rather ſtartled at the queſtion.

He heſitatingly ſaid, "Why,—indeed, I cannot ſay;—I——."

"Pray, (continued Miſs Lyttleton,) don't be aſhamed of ſpeaking your opinion. You poſitively look quite frightened."

"Frightened, indeed! (cried Mr. Corbet, who begun to recover his compoſure.) I may well be frightened at ſuch an invidious queſtion, for to agree with you in opinion juſt now, I muſt pay you a very bad compliment."

"Well, (cried Miſs Lyttleton,) Lord Beaufort will ſoon judge for himſelf in this matter."

"I

"I ought (replied Lord Beaufort) rather to be afraid than impatient to ſee this ſo tranſcendent a beauty."

"You are, indeed, quite in the right, (anſwered Miſs Lyttleton:) you will ſee her but too ſoon, I dare ſay."

"Why, if I can brave the dangers that ſurround me at preſent, (replied Lord Beaufort, bowing very reſpectfully to the ladies,) I think that I can have nothing to fear."

The converſation was here interrupted by Lady Cecilia, who changed the dialogue to ſome other ſubject more agreeable to her feelings.

END OF VOL. I.